

BEFORE THE  
CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS (BSA)

In the matter of

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC)  
Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

555 Capitol Mall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2010  
9:15 A.M.

Reported by:  
Peter Petty

## APPEARANCES

## Members Present

Nasir Ahmadi, Chair

Mary Camacho, Vice Chair

Kerri Spano, Panel Member

## Staff Present

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Panel Counsel

Diane Hamel, Executive Secretary

## Interviewees

Melissa M. Brown

Maria Blanco

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: The hour being 9:14 a.m.

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and all Panelists present and ready to begin, let's go

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ahead and go back on record. Our next Applicant is Dr.

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Melissa Brown.

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Welcome, Dr. Brown. How are you?

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DR. BROWN: I'm well, thank you.

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MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are you ready to begin?

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DR. BROWN: Yes.

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MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.

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What specific skills do you believe a good Commissioner

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should possess? Of those skills, which do you possess?

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Which do you not possess, and how will you compensate for

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it? Is there anything in your life that would prohibit or

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impair your ability to perform all of the duties of a

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Commissioner?

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DR. BROWN: First, there is nothing in my life

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that would prohibit me from performing the duties of a

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Commissioner. And I really look forward to working with

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all of you and all of the experts and others in the State

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of California in order to do something meaningful for the

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State.

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My concerns and belief about what specific skills

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an excellent Commissioner needs are as follows: First, I

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believe they really need to be able to listen very deeply

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and to listen with empathy, placing one's self in the

1 position of presenter, regardless of one's political views  
2 or cultural upbringing. I believe that, as a result of  
3 listening deeply, what that does is to open pathways to  
4 deeper communication, as well as builds bridges for mutual  
5 acceptance, regardless of how complicated the issue is, or  
6 how controversial the issue is. In addition to that, I  
7 believe it leads to discovery of kernels of truth that  
8 have a common heartthrob for everyone to be able to build  
9 consensus upon. Without listening deeply or listening  
10 with empathy, you can't build that type of connection. In  
11 addition, I believe that it leads to the identification of  
12 common truths and threads of truth that run through  
13 complicated issues, whether those issues be understanding  
14 the impact that an industry will have on the state, or  
15 whether or not immigration will be impacted in a certain  
16 way, or not, but listening deeply really helps to equalize  
17 the learning plane for all of us that will be involved in  
18 this process. Also, I think listening deeply helps to  
19 guard against biases and prejudices.

20           Secondly, I think that all of the Commissioners  
21 need to be unwaveringly and steadfastly objective - easier  
22 said than done because it is not something that is  
23 practiced on an everyday basis, particularly in our  
24 comfortable home or corporate environment, we tend to  
25 become easily opinionated, and easily influenced by those

1 matters which are important to us. So, being unwaveringly  
2 objective is something that has to be practiced, almost as  
3 though it's a science, and it's not an easy thing to do.  
4 I believe that I have a strong capability of doing that,  
5 however, all of us must admit that it is a difficult thing  
6 to practice on a day to day basis, particularly with very  
7 tedious, time-consuming, complex mathematical issues.

8           Thirdly, I believe that a person needs to be a  
9 creative problem solver and see solutions when you're  
10 looking at very complicated issues. If you're a creative  
11 problem-solver, you'll look for the ways to put a puzzle  
12 piece together so that it makes sense and has great  
13 benefits for all, knowing that the objective is putting  
14 that puzzle piece together as quickly and as swiftly as  
15 possible, but that the pieces don't all come to you in a  
16 united whole, but that somewhere out there, you can put  
17 that puzzle piece together. Being creative is the ability  
18 to, I believe, see those pieces when others don't, and  
19 figure out where they go. Also, I believe that being a  
20 creative problem solver leads to an ability to build  
21 bridges and also to guide people to different elements of  
22 the common goals that they are pursuing and to stay  
23 focused on those common goals.

24           Fourthly, I believe that it is necessary to be  
25 able to synthesize data, not just read it, but synthesize

1 the data so that it has meaning from one aspect to the  
2 other, so that you can tie that meaning to the common  
3 goal, or the common outcomes that are desired, no matter  
4 what application we are faced with. Also, that ability to  
5 synthesize data, I think, leads to being able to  
6 facilitate the acknowledgement of "ah hah" moments when  
7 they happen, so those "ah hah" moments can help people  
8 understand and communicate better, and work together well,  
9 even though they may have diametrically opposing views.

10           Fifthly, I believe that we must all possess the  
11 ability to be culturally proficient, culturally proficient  
12 not from the point of view of understanding the cultural  
13 mores of different groups and their cultural practices,  
14 that's all well and good, but proficient in being able to  
15 deeply understand what motivates different groups to act,  
16 how they think, how they value things, what their value  
17 proposition is, so that that can be integrated into the  
18 common objective of what it is that we're doing. So, it  
19 is nice to be able to understand how all the different  
20 communities work together in our marvelous State. When we  
21 started, I believe, in the early 1800s, there were over 70  
22 different Indian ethnicities here as our State was being  
23 formed, so cultural diversity is our State's plus and the  
24 strength that I think must be deeply understood as we do  
25 anything because, in the future, that will be an important

1 part of our State and whatever we accomplish working  
2 together for our state.

3           Sixth, I think we need to have a complete and a  
4 very deep understanding of the rich history of California,  
5 not only the cultural history, but its industrial history,  
6 its agribusiness history, all of the different  
7 contributions that this State has made in order to  
8 understand the motivations of those who would be bringing  
9 forth their concerns, and what they're advocating for, for  
10 us, so that, if we understand that, we'll be able to  
11 connect with them better and, again, build better bridges  
12 with them. But within that, it's also important to  
13 understand the economic and political situation of the  
14 State, the impact of the Budget, we currently have our  
15 huge budget deficit that we will be facing in 2010, that  
16 will total something in excess of \$72 billion, so we have  
17 to look at those economic institutions and those social  
18 institutions, as well.

19           I believe we need to be able to - number seven,  
20 have the ability to think critically. Critical analysis  
21 is important, but it is more than just the critical  
22 analysis, it is also the ability to delve into what we're  
23 reviewing and listening to and hearing, and critically put  
24 the different pieces together, rather than just  
25 regurgitate common threads or common interests, so it is



1 important to be able to be objective in the process of  
2 critically thinking, as well.

3           Number eight for me is to have that unwavering  
4 faith and emotional mental discipline because we will be  
5 facing a myriad of interests and concerns and political  
6 pull and pushes from a variety of groups, whether they are  
7 legislative groups, or community-based organizations, or  
8 rural organizations, or Gay, Straight, Lesbian  
9 organizations, religious organizations, wherever it is  
10 coming from, it is important for the Commissioners to be  
11 able to have that focused faith and unwavering mental  
12 discipline and stability to maintain that objectivity, as  
13 well. And couple that with a positive outlook, no matter  
14 what happens, in order to be able to solve problems with  
15 dignity and strength and knowing that we're doing the  
16 right thing.

17           Ninth, I believe we need to have the capacity to  
18 understand complex evaluation tools, and statistical  
19 measurements in order to make meaning of them. In my  
20 case, I happen to be an Economist, I'm a Stanford  
21 graduate, as well as my PhD is in Educational Economics  
22 from University of California Davis, so I do have a really  
23 good understanding of linear programming and econometrics,  
24 and statistical analysis, which will help me. I hope to  
25 be able to share that with my other Commissioners, but I

1 think it is important to be able to do that because  
2 numbers can be used to tell a variety of stories, and it's  
3 important to be able to unravel those numbers to their  
4 core in order to be able to, again, make meaning of them,  
5 to make meaningful decisions, and pull that out which is  
6 more truthful than less truthful, and meets the greater  
7 good of our task. So it's important to have that  
8 statistical evaluation capacity and background and the  
9 ability to do mathematical reasoning.

10           The tenth this is, I do believe it is important to  
11 have superior writing skills, superior communication  
12 skills, because with those superior writing, research,  
13 communication skills, we will be able to communicate more  
14 effectively with all the different population groups that  
15 we are representing. It is important to be able to speak  
16 the language of the group that we're working with, whether  
17 it is an industrial sector, or minority business group, or  
18 an agribusiness group, or whatever the case may be  
19 representing us, it is just as important to have that kind  
20 of understanding and mastery as it is to be able to speak  
21 French, parlais Francais en Francais, when you're there.  
22 I speak French completely and pretty fairly accurately in  
23 Dutch, but when you're there and you speak the language to  
24 the people that you're visiting, you get a different  
25 result and you get an opportunity to listen even more

1 deeply and more completely and find out things that you  
2 normally wouldn't find out if you have some basic mastery  
3 of whatever that field of endeavor or industry may be.

4           And tenth -- or 11<sup>th</sup> -- I think we need to have a  
5 knowledge of governmental regulations, governmental  
6 policies, particularly those that affect the redistricting  
7 process, of course, but those governmental policies that  
8 also affect the State Board of Equalization and all of the  
9 other major entities in our 58 counties that we'll be  
10 working with, that have some impact on the redistricting  
11 process. That is a lot said, but overall, the 12<sup>th</sup> thing  
12 is - end of my dozen here - is we must have that  
13 professional confidence in order to build the trust and  
14 that positive leadership ability, to build the trust and  
15 the faith that others have in us, that we are making a  
16 fair and objective decision and that we are considering  
17 all of the components that they put forth in front of us,  
18 and it is important to be able to demonstrate through that  
19 confidence that our main concern is helping others, and  
20 when we're helping others and reaching them, and sharing  
21 their concerns and really evaluating their concerns in a  
22 fair and objective manner, I think we get a totally  
23 different and fuller opportunity to be of service to the  
24 State of California. Financial Management is also very  
25 important to understand, financial budgeting, and all

1 those complex issues that will be impacting our decisions  
2 and the budget of our State here. And those are just some  
3 of the basic skills that I think are needed by all of the  
4 Commissioners. And my weakest one would be understanding  
5 all of the governmental policies and practices that will  
6 be put forth in front of us. I've never been involved in  
7 a redistricting commission or policy before, this would be  
8 my first appointment, but I do have extraordinary  
9 abilities to do research and to unravel complex data, so  
10 I'm looking forward to being able to do that, but that is  
11 the biggest weakness here. I'm fairly strong on  
12 leadership capabilities. One of my strengths is to be  
13 able to synthesize well and to encourage people to work  
14 together, particularly in a collaborative fashion.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: With about eight minutes  
16 remaining, describe a circumstance from your personal  
17 experience where you had to work with others to resolve a  
18 conflict or a difference of opinion. Please describe the  
19 issue and explain your role in addressing and resolving  
20 the conflict. If you were selected to serve on the  
21 Citizens Redistricting Commission, tell us how you would  
22 resolve conflicts that may arise among the Commissioners.

23 DR. BROWN: I don't think anyone has the silver  
24 bullet on how to solve all of the conflicts, but to give  
25 you an example and to show you how I would work through

1 it, I am now a semi-retired individual. I retired as an  
2 Assistant Superintendent of the Sacramento City Unified  
3 School District in 2006, I am now gainfully employed  
4 running the Nehemiah Community Foundation and helping  
5 others through giving funds to various community-based  
6 organizations throughout the State. But when I was the  
7 Assistant Superintendent, one of the major issues still  
8 facing the State was the reduction and the closing of the  
9 achievement gap. As one of the Assistant Superintendents,  
10 much like the State of California, we had a cabinet and  
11 the Superintendent - and there were only about five or six  
12 other cabinet members - one time the Superintendent that I  
13 was working with at the time, who initially hired me,  
14 looked around the room and said, "You know, we really need  
15 to close this achievement gap, and so, in order to do  
16 that, I'm appointing you, Melissa, and another member of  
17 our staff, who is also a minority, to be able to just lead  
18 that charge and do the work to close the achievement gap  
19 in our district.

20 Immediately, I thought about that and pushed back  
21 in this manner, I said, "Sir, with all due respect, that  
22 is fine, but my portfolio is Student Services. My  
23 Associate Portfolio is High Schools." He is the  
24 Superintendent of High Schools. "It needs all of us in  
25 this room, the Assistant Superintendent of the Elementary

1 Education, the Assistant Superintendent of Construction  
2 and Buildings, the Human Resource Assistant  
3 Superintendent, in order to have appropriate hiring  
4 practices and policies, that all work together for the  
5 good of closing the achievement gap, because all of those  
6 have the achievement gap." That was not well received by  
7 our leader and there was significant feedback, and you  
8 could hear a pin drop in that room. I proceeded to  
9 factually point out the data, show why we needed the  
10 entire team to work together in the roles of each of the  
11 team members in order to accomplish the goal of achieving  
12 the closure. When that meeting ended, it ended with the  
13 little bit of conflict. The following day, I was called  
14 into the office and, at that point, I stood for my values  
15 and said, "You know, we really really need to work  
16 together, it would be really hard for just the two of us  
17 to do that," to which the Superintendent said, "You know,  
18 I thought about that last night. I apologize, we do need  
19 to put this group together so that we can work together as  
20 a comprehensive whole." As a result, what we did was we  
21 built a strong collaboration. He allowed me to work as  
22 the leader in the group, not only to help close the  
23 achievement gap, but to raise an additional \$50 million  
24 for Student Support Services, and started from a staff  
25 that I initially had of just two, we grew it to 250, and

1 provided support services to parents and others in the  
2 District.

3 So it is through research, collaboration, working  
4 together, and being strong enough to stand up for the  
5 goals to, then, really follow through to do something  
6 about it.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
8 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will  
9 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
10 the Commission's work to harm the State, and if so, in  
11 what ways?

12 DR. BROWN: Well, I think the most powerful way it  
13 will impact the State is by changing the process of  
14 setting the geographic boundaries of the State's 120  
15 Legislative Districts, and what I'm hoping that that will  
16 do is to form a fairly objective way of working together  
17 with the people, the legislatures, the common larger  
18 industries who have a stake in how the boundaries are set,  
19 but to allow people to have - the common person - to have  
20 more of an impact on how this is put together, so that our  
21 State can grow and thrive and prosper in accordance with  
22 where it's going in the future. And I think that this  
23 model will allow us to be able to knit together that kind  
24 of a collaborative base that is not really possible in a  
25 way that it was done in the past. I think the 14-member

1 Commission, if we truly form a collaboration with all of  
2 the partners, the Legislature, the industry bases, the  
3 trades, and the cultural organizations, etc., will be able  
4 to make a difference. I think the State Board of  
5 Equalization, since it's our only tax commission in the  
6 nation that was created, it will be able to get a better  
7 way based on population to make changes - I'm sorry - and  
8 the way that we're currently set up now is that 34 percent  
9 of our annual revenue from the State government comes from  
10 the way that we collect the taxes, and I believe that  
11 we'll have a wonderful opportunity to make sure that the  
12 way the population lines are drawn, we'll be able to  
13 increase our revenue base even more so in specific  
14 counties, including rural Districts, working with Special  
15 Districts, and also with the rural and forming areas, in a  
16 more significant manner throughout our State.

17           Thirdly, I believe that it will build the strength  
18 and the capacities of our State better, incorporating our  
19 somewhat idiosyncratic values here in California, but  
20 knitting them together in such a way that it makes a  
21 difference.

22           In terms of the negatives, I believe that we need  
23 to respect the viewpoints of all people in this process,  
24 particularly working to validate the concerns of  
25 disenfranchised groups. I also think that a negative



1 could be if the 14-member Board fails to honor our own  
2 commitments and to work hard, entirely on behalf of the  
3 tasks that need to be completed, in order to be  
4 responsible stewards, and to be servant leaders in the  
5 work that we're doing. I think another negative is that  
6 we would miss our opportunity to create a groundswell of  
7 support for the new redistricting process, if we only try  
8 to protect incumbents, instead of working together to  
9 really build a floor and a base to support all individuals  
10 who reside in our wonderful State, which is one of the  
11 largest, most populated States in the Nation. So, if we  
12 fail to knit together the needs of the urban residents and  
13 the rural residents, the Hispanic, the physically  
14 challenged, the handicapped, the religions, and all of  
15 that, then I think we have missed an opportunity to be of  
16 service.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have about a minute and  
18 a half remaining, so, Panelists, shall we extend time by  
19 five minutes?

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. Describe a situation  
22 where you had to work as a part of a group to achieve a  
23 common goal, tell us about the goal, describe your role  
24 within the group, and tell us how the group worked or did  
25 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal. If you're

1 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
2 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
3 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
4 Commission meets its legal deadlines.

5 DR. BROWN: Well, in order to meet the legal  
6 deadlines, I think there are a lot of things that we need  
7 to do. First, I believe we need to do some backward  
8 mapping in order to make sure that our work plan and the  
9 major outcomes, we do have that into our work plan with  
10 benchmarks to remind us of what needs to be done. I  
11 believe we need to work in great collaboration with our  
12 experts in the various areas, whether it's the mapping  
13 aspects of it, or the statistical population,  
14 understanding first and foremost what was done 10 years  
15 ago, so that we do not make the same mistakes that  
16 happened and that we learn the lessons from what happened  
17 in the redistricting process that happened in the last 10  
18 years.

19 I also believe that, in working together, when we  
20 pull together - someone alluded to closing the achievement  
21 gap and how that team worked together to close the  
22 problem, to more provide the services directly to the  
23 parents and others in the district - but I believe that we  
24 need to have a comprehensive fact finding and needs  
25 assessment session before we move forward, that is tied in

1 a comprehensive way to that work plan and the backward  
2 mapping. It should begin with a review of statistical  
3 data and evaluation in the past; it also needs to have  
4 structured methods that are agreed upon, in advance, that  
5 these are common policies in our working agreements of how  
6 we're going to achieve our deadlines and meet our work  
7 plan. I believe those structured methods need to also  
8 include reflection and introspection, as well as the modes  
9 of behavior and communication that are acceptable. And  
10 when we agree to disagree and not disagree, and usually  
11 with any working team, that makes it work smoother and  
12 easier among us. I believe we need to review and master  
13 the conditions that govern the redistricting process. I  
14 believe we need to develop a comprehensive marketing plan  
15 that will also be tied into that work plan, but make sure  
16 that we're hearing all of the respective voices that have  
17 anything to do with this decision-making process. I also  
18 believe that any working group and working team needs to  
19 have a public communications and an advocacy plan, as  
20 well, and that our experts working with us need to make  
21 sure that that reaches all the nooks and crannies of the  
22 people who are voiceless, that are often overlooked.

23 It's most important to clearly define outcomes in  
24 advance, that everyone can see in some tangible way. A  
25 poorly defined outcomes leads to stagnation and we

1 certainly wouldn't want that in any kind of shape, form,  
2 or fashion. But, most importantly, we need to have a  
3 logic model that governs what it is that we're doing and,  
4 in addition to the tangible outlines and goals and  
5 outcomes of what we're producing, and that we do that in a  
6 consistent manner. I believe, also, that it is very  
7 upfront in this particular case with the Redistricting  
8 Commission to meet with those key legislators who have  
9 some trouble dealing with the new process, so that we can  
10 understand what their concerns are and incorporate those,  
11 mitigate those concerns, as soon as possible.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: With almost three minutes  
13 remaining, a considerable amount of the Commission's work  
14 will involve meeting with people from all over California  
15 who come from very different backgrounds and very  
16 different perspectives. If you are selected to serve on  
17 the Citizens Redistricting Commission, tell us about the  
18 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
19 at interacting with the public.

20 DR. BROWN: Well, the skills that I possess that  
21 will make me very interactive with that public is I do  
22 have very good, very deep listening skills. I am able to  
23 synthesize data quickly and pinpoint issues that are of  
24 concern and of value to knit together consensus. I  
25 believe it's important to be an effective listener and I

1 do have those skills. The ability to synthesize data is  
2 very important, too, as well as to critically analyze  
3 statistical data that often comes at us in batches, and to  
4 get down to the discernible threads that really help it  
5 make sense for others; I'm able to synthesize that data so  
6 that we can put it into a common language, so that people  
7 will understand it, accept it, and work with it, and be  
8 able to give us feedback that we can then incorporate into  
9 the work that we're doing. I believe it's important to be  
10 an excellent researcher, to go back and capture data,  
11 capture information, statistical events, historical  
12 events, political events that have anything to do with the  
13 work that we're doing, and to incorporate that into the  
14 process, to change the behaviors when necessary and to  
15 modify our own behaviors, we need to modify those. But it  
16 also helps us to more fully understand the work that we're  
17 doing and the issues that we're being confronted with.

18 I believe that it's necessary to have effective  
19 critical thinking skills and the ability to simplify data  
20 whenever possible, and to look for nature outcomes based  
21 on the input from community organizers and others. I have  
22 a good ability to work with different community organizers  
23 and to help them see and work towards common objectives  
24 based on natural outcomes. Another skill I have that I  
25 hope to be able to contribute is the ability to put

1 together effective public presentations with PowerPoint  
2 and other tools that will make sense to the public, so  
3 that they will be able to be motivated and to be a  
4 contributory member of the process, and to help them feel  
5 valued.

6 I've produced a couple of television shows, so if  
7 that comes in handy in working with the marketing  
8 component, I hope to be able to do that, as well.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you. Good morning, Dr.  
11 Brown.

12 DR. BROWN: Good morning.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: I know you have a lot to share with  
14 us and I know you probably skipped some of the information  
15 that you were planning -

16 DR. BROWN: Yes.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: -- to share with us. Is there  
18 anything important that you want to add in the next two  
19 minutes?

20 DR. BROWN: That remain?

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes.

22 DR. BROWN: Yes. I believe, and I do agree with a  
23 philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, 600 years B.C., who said,  
24 the first rule is to keep an untroubled spirit, and I  
25 believe that all the Commissioners need to keep that

1 untroubled spirit in order to be fair and objective, and  
2 impartial at all times. The second rule, he said, is to  
3 look at things for what they are and to know them for what  
4 they are, and I believe it is important for us to value  
5 the feedback that we're given, to make sure that it's  
6 incorporated in what we do, and to keep up that high  
7 energy level, and to uplift the spirits of all those that  
8 we're working with that carries me forth on my path, and  
9 I'm hoping to share that positive energy with the  
10 Commission and with all individuals that I'm hopefully  
11 going to come into contact with.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much. I have a few  
13 follow-up questions in regards to your responses. I just  
14 want to make sure that I'm --

15 DR. BROWN: Yes, sir.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: -- clear in my mind. You mentioned  
17 about being creative when you are looking at the  
18 Commission's work. What areas of the Commission work do  
19 you think that skill will benefit the most?

20 DR. BROWN: The skill of creativity for me means  
21 being able to look at disparate views and find a way, a  
22 creative way, of helping them to agree to support a common  
23 objective, agree to understand the challenges faced by an  
24 industry in such a way that something meaningful could be  
25 done to help that industry that others did not think of,

1 being able to look at a specific map, or a specific  
2 population, or a growth area, or a target area, and find  
3 creative ways of getting people to see how this community  
4 has commonalities with that community in terms of the  
5 redistricting, or the actual mapping process, and those  
6 are some of the ways that I would see creativity coming to  
7 bear on this process.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, gotcha. Thank you. When you  
9 were discussing your response to question 3, you also,  
10 when you were discussing about the impact on the State,  
11 you also touched on a potential increase in the revenue  
12 base, when you were talking about the Board of  
13 Equalization. Could you give us a little more detail on  
14 your thoughts on how the redistricting will impact an  
15 increase in the revenue that is collected by the Board of  
16 Equalization?

17 DR. BROWN: Well, right now, most of the revenue  
18 collected from the State Board of Equalization, it is my  
19 understanding, comes from the wealthy, and just the top  
20 sliver of the wealthy and about 60 percent of that, I  
21 believe. The mapping process may be able to uncover  
22 enclaves or populations that have differences, for  
23 instance, that we've not tapped before, different  
24 industries that have the ability to bring in maybe new  
25 revenues, or underserved populations, or maybe there is a



1 population base that is right under that typical three  
2 percent of the highest wealthy that also has a capability  
3 of contributing more to the tax base, that has not been  
4 fully addressed before, or there's been some  
5 inconsistency, or incongruence with the way the map was  
6 formulated before, that may include them and may lead to  
7 that revenue generation increase.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: I'm still not clear, to be honest,  
9 about the impact that the lines will have, or the new  
10 lines, redrawn, on the revenues collected by the Board of  
11 Equalization. Can you be a little more specific? Help me  
12 understand, please.

13 DR. BROWN: Yes. I have not been involved in the  
14 redistricting process before -

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay -

16 DR. BROWN: -- so I am not, to be honest with you,  
17 exactly certain of how that could happen, it may not be  
18 possible, I do not have that specific experience, and as  
19 you asked earlier, that is a weakness in my application,  
20 is knowing how the lines impact the different revenue  
21 collection processes of the State Board of Equalization.  
22 So, I'm hopeful that I will be able to do that in as - and  
23 I will be looking forward, as an Economist, to figuring  
24 that out and being more responsive to you as I become more  
25 research with my staff at that time, on how - what

1 relationships actually could bring to bear that revenue  
2 generation impact.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you so much.

4 DR. BROWN: Uh huh.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: As part of that response to  
6 question 3, if I heard you correctly, you also mentioned  
7 that some type of interaction or collaboration with the  
8 Legislature - did I hear you correctly? Could you  
9 elaborate on that, please?

10 DR. BROWN: And it was not so much that - I  
11 understand that the 14-member Board would be responsible  
12 for the redistricting process. What I was trying to  
13 convey is that, when the last redistricting process was  
14 done, the State Legislature played the most pivotal role  
15 in doing that. In order to transfer to the new process, I  
16 believe it is important to understand all of the concerns  
17 that the State Legislature had at that time, and how that  
18 process was done, and their objections to this process,  
19 their concerns about this process, and to work with them  
20 in a more collaborative manner, and fully understanding  
21 what their concerns are so that, as the 14-member Board  
22 makes our decisions, we are not making those decisions in  
23 a vacuum without hearing the voice of those legislative  
24 members who are concerned about this process.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: So, you are suggesting that, as

1 much as possible, the Commission should seek input from  
2 the Legislature when redrawing the lines?

3 DR. BROWN: From those entities who have concerns,  
4 I believe it is important for us to understand the  
5 historical concerns that those legislators had, specific  
6 legislators had, and do continue to have, as far as the  
7 redistricting process is concerned. For example, the  
8 Prop. 27 to repeal the Redistricting Commission, now, has  
9 considerable backing from certain legislators, and I do  
10 believe that it's important for their voice to be heard,  
11 as well as the voices of all other cultural ethnicities  
12 and others in the State of California, and I do believe it  
13 is important to put that up front and to make that  
14 communication and that willingness to hear and cooperate  
15 and work with those individuals as upfront as possible.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: As you know, the Commission will  
17 have to hire consultants, legal consultants, to help them  
18 with the legal aspect on the work.

19 DR. BROWN: Yes.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: If the legal consultant for the  
21 Commission approaches you and tells you, "Dr. Brown, uh  
22 uh, you cannot do that, the law prohibits you from  
23 contacting the Legislature," what would you say to that?

24 DR. BROWN: I abide by the rules and regulations  
25 of the Commission - Commissioners -- and the practices and

1 the policies and procedures of the Commissioners. If  
2 direct communication is not allowed, then it is not  
3 allowed, we must abide by that first and foremost.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: What about indirect?

5 DR. BROWN: That will be something that I will  
6 have to totally follow, the advice of the Legislative  
7 attorney assigned to my particular -

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thanks.

9 DR. BROWN: And, again, those are the rules and  
10 regulations and policies, and the first part of my  
11 presentation that I was referring to, that is where the  
12 Commissioners need to master those in advance, prior to  
13 assuming the Commission, and making sure to strictly  
14 adhere to those. I am sure we will get that type of  
15 advice from our advisors.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much.

17 DR. BROWN: You are most welcome, Mr. Ahmadi.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: I have a few other follow-up  
19 questions on your responses, but I was also planning to  
20 ask you two more questions, so let me get to those  
21 questions first, and if I have time, I'll come back to my  
22 follow-up questions.

23 DR. BROWN: Absolutely.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: The first one that I wanted to ask  
25 you, based on your application material is, you know, as

1 indicated in the application, you have worked with both  
2 Congress member Matsui's Office -

3 DR. BROWN: Yes.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: -- developing legislation related  
5 to - I believe it is the Nell Soto Program?

6 DR. BROWN: Yes, the Nell Soto Program.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Nell Soto Program, yeah, sorry, my  
8 handwriting here is -

9 DR. BROWN: Oh, no problem.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: And also, which I believe the State  
11 Legislators on the Healthy Start Program?

12 DR. BROWN: Yes, it's the Safe Schools Healthy  
13 Students Program, and those two programs, if you're asking  
14 for clarification about what they were, the Nell Soto  
15 Program came about largely as a result of a program that  
16 was begun in the Sacramento City Unified School District,  
17 it's called the Parent Teacher Home Visiting Program, and  
18 there were members of the Board of the Sacramento City  
19 Unified School District and our staff that worked with  
20 Congressman Matsui's Office and the Legislator's Office in  
21 order to advocate for the creation and replication of the  
22 Parent Teacher Home Program throughout the State. And  
23 that indeed did occur, funding was allowed, we acted as a  
24 resource and a tool to train different school districts  
25 throughout the State about how to make this happen. When

1 parent teacher home visiting occurs, test scores go up,  
2 the academic performance of the youth go up, and that did,  
3 in fact, happen and we were able to show that, in working  
4 collaboration with the legislative representatives at that  
5 time, to be able to set aside or create the funding for  
6 this program to be replicated throughout the State, and it  
7 was a very effective program. With respect to Save  
8 Schools Healthy Students, Congressman Matsui, at the time,  
9 was very instrumental in helping us to get through the  
10 various aspects, in fact, he wrote a letter of support for  
11 our application that went into the Federal Government. As  
12 a result, our district really won a large multi-million  
13 dollar program and we were very appreciative of his  
14 efforts on our behalf, as all Congressmen do try to work  
15 with great proposals, and we were able to get a four-year  
16 program into the District which impacted our 52,000  
17 students at that time.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Do you continue to have contacts or  
19 interactions with members of the Legislature or their  
20 staff members?

21 DR. BROWN: Not at this time. I operate a  
22 community foundation, the Nehemiah Community Foundation,  
23 and I get to be on the side that is very fair and  
24 impartial and that gives gifts and life giving support to  
25 small community-based organizations, and I really enjoy

1 being there because we work with the homeless, we work  
2 with various health groups, and the Kennedy Center, and a  
3 variety of others, in a way that supports the Arts, as  
4 well as parenting and homeless programs throughout the  
5 nation.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: So, you said that not recently.

7 DR. BROWN: No, not recently.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: When was the last time that you had  
9 interactions -

10 DR. BROWN: I retired, Mr. Ahmadi, from the School  
11 District in 2006.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: 2006. And since retirement, you  
13 have had no interaction?

14 DR. BROWN: No.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: And it sounds to me like these  
16 activities were as part of your professional work.

17 DR. BROWN: My professional work, absolutely, you  
18 are correct.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much.

20 DR. BROWN: You are welcome.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Now, let me get to my follow-up  
22 questions. Well, before that, have you ever had any  
23 appointed or positions that were appointed by the  
24 California Legislature or the Governor's Office?

25 DR. BROWN: No, sir.

1           CHAIR AHMADI: No, okay. Thanks again. In  
2 response to question 4, I may have missed part of your  
3 response. Did you share with us an example from your life  
4 experience where you had to work as part of a group to  
5 achieve a common goal?

6           DR. BROWN: The example that I provided was an  
7 example with the common goal of closing the achievement  
8 gap with the school district.

9           CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

10          DR. BROWN: But I also used it as a two-fer  
11 because it was also an issue with respect to the conflict  
12 resolution. With - I would be happy to provide you with  
13 another example if you need that at this point?

14          CHAIR AHMADI: No, that's fine, unless you want  
15 to.

16          DR. BROWN: Well, you know, I can just give you a  
17 real quick one, and it's one that I'm doing with the  
18 current position, since you seem to be interested in that.  
19 The CEO of the corporation wanted to bring together a team  
20 to start a leadership program. In terms of providing  
21 leadership education to culturally diverse individuals in  
22 the City of Sacramento. It started off with an idea, we  
23 pulled in a team of community leaders from the region, we  
24 created that program last year, it's an inaugural program,  
25 we were able to achieve our objective of providing not



1    only leadership skills, but training to our initial cohort  
2    of fellows who went through that program, and we graduated  
3    our first class last year - 96. - I'm sorry -- 99.6  
4    percent of those graduates rated it very very highly and  
5    it is now being supported by very large industries,  
6    including the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District,  
7    Intel, and Resnick Accounting Firm, which is the 14<sup>th</sup>  
8    largest Accounting firm in the United States, and others.  
9    And it will be sustainable, we're hopeful. But it was  
10   effectively launched and done within one year. And it  
11   started from an idea, and it is now fully integrated into  
12   the fabric of the Sacramento Region.

13            CHAIR AHMADI:    Wow, very impressive.

14            DR. BROWN:    Thank you.

15            CHAIR AHMADI:    Thanks. You mentioned that you  
16   have been involved, or you have participated in TV shows?

17            DR. BROWN:    Yes.

18            CHAIR AHMADI:    Could you tell us about that?

19            DR. BROWN:    Well, I'm going to date myself by  
20   telling you about that, but it started - I was in one of  
21   my previous lives, a business manager for Comedian Dick  
22   Gregory, and that's where I began to work on the  
23   television show alongside him. In addition to that, I'm  
24   going to fast forward to the Sacramento City Unified  
25   School District for the seven years I wrote and produced a

1 show called *Parent Haven* on behalf of the District, and it  
2 was a show for parents in our market, it went out to  
3 350,000 individuals on Public Access Television, and it  
4 aired for seven years, and it was one of their little top  
5 rated shows, and we won one of the television shows, a  
6 little local television show, but it nevertheless won one  
7 of their awards. So, we are happy with that.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much. Maybe my  
9 last question because I am running out of time, but you  
10 mentioned a couple of times - I'm sorry?

11 MS. HAMEL: Three and a half minutes.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much.

13 DR. BROWN: Thanks, Ms. Hamel.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: I think, you know, I'm looking for  
15 maybe a minute response or so. You mentioned a couple of  
16 times that the statistical data, or statistical analysis  
17 of the data is important.

18 DR. BROWN: Yes.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: You mentioned that as part of your  
20 response to question 1 when you were describing the  
21 skills, and also as part of your, you know, description of  
22 the response for number 4. Can you tell us a little more  
23 in what ways the statistical data analysis, or statistical  
24 data will be used as part of the Commission's decision-  
25 making process?

1           DR. BROWN: The population projects are, for  
2   example, a big part of it, and population projects are  
3   very complex, they are based on the movement and the  
4   migration of individuals throughout this State. There are  
5   experts who have a variety of mathematical tools to do  
6   that. In addition, when we undertake any assessment,  
7   feedback from any population, I am hopeful that we will be  
8   able to do that using surveys, again, that can be tied to  
9   a variety of different rubrics and scoring mechanisms, and  
10   in a variety of ways to use math in order to come up with  
11   a more objective way of reviewing the data that is in  
12   front of you, whether it is population data or income data  
13   or tax data, they all have an underlying mathematical  
14   base, and those experts who are putting together the  
15   reports in order to look at the impact on the various  
16   regions or the entire state as a whole, usually have some  
17   kind of underlying evaluative or statistical programming  
18   or mathematical model. It is helpful to understand that  
19   so that you can appropriately interpret the results.

20           CHAIR AHMADI: So, again, if the legal counsel,  
21   the Commission's legal counsel, approaches you and says,  
22   "Dr. Brown, the law requires that the redistricting lines  
23   should be solely based on the Census data --

24           DR. BROWN: Correct -

25           CHAIR AHMADI: -- plus the input from the public,"

1 would you be comfortable with -

2 DR. BROWN: Absolutely.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: -- not looking at the projection of  
4 that data, or the demographics?

5 DR. BROWN: Absolutely. As I mentioned earlier,  
6 the policies, procedures and the practices set by the  
7 Commission in order to achieve the outcome, the desired  
8 outcome in the redistricting, are those that must be  
9 foremost and upheld to the highest degree.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much, appreciate  
11 it.

12 DR. BROWN: Yes.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Good morning, Dr.  
15 Brown.

16 DR. BROWN: Good morning, Ms. Camacho.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You might have already  
18 answered this when you answered Mr. Ahmadi's question  
19 about the Nell Soto legislation, what was your role in  
20 that legislation?

21 DR. YOUNG: My role was basically doing the  
22 research, showing the efficacy of the program, collecting  
23 the data, showing how it worked, what the statistical  
24 impacts were on the youth who were involved, and setting  
25 up the policies and procedures in order to do the training

1 for the program, so that it could be replicated.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So it wasn't help to enact  
3 it, it was after the fact, to how to implement it?

4 DR. BROWN: It was actually before the fact, so  
5 that the data was generated to show whether it was worthy  
6 of replicating, whether the legislators should have been  
7 based on that particular model or not, and then, after the  
8 fact, training throughout the State.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. When I was looking  
10 through your application packet, I noted that your - I  
11 could not identify the relationship from the letters of  
12 recommendations, the individuals that wrote your letters  
13 of recommendation to you. Can you kind of explain -

14 DR. BROWN: Ms. Alice Huffman, who is with the  
15 NAACP, I have known for the past 20 years, as both of us  
16 are community organizers in different ways in our local  
17 area, here. So she knows me. You are talking about the  
18 letters of recommendation, correct?

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No. I have Doni Blumenstock,  
20 Larry Lee, and Daniel Lundgren.

21 DR. BROWN: Okay. And I thought that Alice  
22 Huffman wrote one, as well.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: She wrote a public comment.

24 DR. BROWN: Public comment, okay. I'm getting all  
25 the letters mixed up.

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No problem.

2 DR. BROWN: I thought you were referring to those.  
3 Doni Blumenstock is in - just recently retired - is the  
4 Executive Director of the American Leadership Forum. She  
5 is more of a recent acquaintance, I have worked with her  
6 very closely last year as we developed the Leadership  
7 Training Program that I mentioned to Mr. Ahmadi earlier.  
8 And through that, we were able to work very very closely  
9 together to develop that program and know each other very  
10 well. The - Representative Lundgren works alongside of  
11 the corporation that I work with, as well, and that is how  
12 I met his acquaintance, through the Nehemiah Corporation  
13 of America. The - and the third one, I've forgotten. You  
14 said?

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh --

16 DR. BROWN: Oh, Larry Lee.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Larry Lee, yes.

18 DR. BROWN: Larry Lee has known me since I was  
19 less than 10, and so for a long long long time, and I've  
20 been very acquainted with his family, his father, and he  
21 is now the Publisher of the Sacramento Observer  
22 Newspapers. My family and his family have worked well  
23 together through the years. His father and my father, for  
24 example, established the Sacramento Black Exposition and  
25 Fair, and that was back in the '70s. So we've known each

1 other for - the families have known each other for a long  
2 time. He also works with supporting a variety of programs  
3 in the community with respect to community-based groups,  
4 and we have worked together throughout the years on  
5 identifying articles that needed to be included in the  
6 newspaper, but also gaining coverage and support for the  
7 school district. He has been supportive of my efforts  
8 throughout the years.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Do you know any other  
10 Congress members other than Dan -

11 DR. BROWN: Other than Dan Lundgren?

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yeah.

13 DR. BROWN: Dave Jones, Steinberg, Assemblyman  
14 Steinberg. They both know me very well in terms of  
15 working in the community, and them also providing letters  
16 of support for me in various other areas, other endeavors  
17 that I've been involved in throughout the years.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Do you know any of their -  
19 you know them, how about staff?

20 DR. BROWN: Staff, I have to be honest with you, I  
21 really don't know as much anymore. When I was a little  
22 bit more involved in that, you will note that I was a Vice  
23 President of Finance and Operations for River West  
24 Developments, that was Phil Angelides' real estate  
25 development firm, his land development firm. At that

1 point, I knew more of the staff because I was more  
2 involved with working directly with individuals. When I  
3 moved to the School District, I became less political and  
4 more involved with educational issues and less involved  
5 with the staff, other than Nathan in Matsui's office that  
6 I've continued to maintain a relationship with.

7 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, so you still are in  
8 contact with -

9 DR. BROWN: Yes, they know me in the community.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: -- Matsui, okay.

11 DR. BROWN: Yes.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: During your Assistant  
13 Superintendent -

14 DR. BROWN: Yes.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: -- you had to go through some  
16 budget cuts. How were you successful during daunting  
17 budget cuts and preserving necessary funding in the School  
18 District for keeping a high quality nursing staff?

19 DR. BROWN: Well, that is a very excellent  
20 question. And it's amazing that you know that. The  
21 nursing staff I was in charge of, the medical and health  
22 staff, and what was on the cutting board at that time was  
23 to really reduce the nursing staff very deeply, by more  
24 than 50 percent. One of the issues and one of the ways I  
25 was able to avoid that was to launch an effective grant



1 writing campaign, to bring in money from outside sources,  
2 to develop collaborative partners from outside sources,  
3 and also to convince the then Management of the School  
4 District to allow us to, as part of that fundraising of  
5 outside funds, as we did that and we lowered the  
6 operational needs in other areas from the district, to  
7 allow us to maintain the nursing staff. And over the  
8 period of that, well, over that period of eight years or  
9 so that I was there, I was able to keep that fundraising  
10 capacity up so that we could not only keep our nursing  
11 staff intact, but also to add another level of needed  
12 nurses, so that we were able to bring on Nurse  
13 Practitioners, which the District had never done before,  
14 to provide more comprehensive support services to those  
15 families who were struggling and didn't have medical care.  
16 The nurses really loved that, I did, I worked tirelessly  
17 to continue to raise the outside funding so that the  
18 District could continue to support the existing staff  
19 without the lay-offs. And that became pretty hard for my  
20 predecessors, I imagine, to do. It is a specialized  
21 expertise. I wish that I could still do it on behalf of  
22 all School Districts, but it is very difficult now to do  
23 grant writing in a variety of markets because of the  
24 shrinking pool. But, at that time, that did help us and  
25 it did help us raise millions. Over that time period that

1 I was there, I raised for the Sacramento Unified School  
2 District in that manner about \$50 million.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: For that eight-year period?

4 DR. BROWN: Yes. And so that not only helped keep  
5 the nurses going, but it kept the support services going,  
6 the after-school programs going, and other things of that  
7 nature that many of them have since been severely reduced,  
8 without the outside fundraising.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What lessons have you learned  
10 from these budget cuts and having to think creatively that  
11 you could bring to the Commission? Because, obviously,  
12 there is a budget there.

13 DR. BROWN: Well, first and foremost, I am a  
14 pretty frugal individual and I never use my budget in its  
15 entirety. Part of the ways of doing that is by making  
16 sure that we find creative ways of getting partnerships  
17 that will help reduce or defray costs, or maybe get things  
18 donated in part, or reduce by thinking of a clever manner  
19 in which to help them shave their own costs. When a  
20 proposal is submitted to me, the first thing I do is to go  
21 through and say, "No, we don't need this, these two  
22 aspects can be combined, and there are other ways to make  
23 sure that this works so that those costs are kept in  
24 check." But the outcome is not reduced, or uncompleted in  
25 any way. So it is important to look at, first of all, do

1 we really need this, second of all, how can we get it done  
2 through collaborative partnering, fourth [sic], are there  
3 outside revenues that we can maybe match to the completion  
4 of this objective - grant writing would be one of the last  
5 ways of doing it because it is so time-consuming and it  
6 usually takes a long time to bring in the revenues. So,  
7 those are some of the techniques that I use in order to do  
8 that.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What type of partnerships  
10 would you think would be beneficial to the Commission's  
11 work?

12 DR. BROWN: You know, at this point, as Mr. Ahmadi  
13 pointed out to me, to know exactly the parameters that the  
14 Commission has to work with from, first; and then, within  
15 that, I think it would be important to look at aspects of  
16 all the research needs and where could we work  
17 collaboratively with the various research organizations in  
18 order to get some of that data, that, if we are paying for  
19 it, we may be able to get it in a different way, or to get  
20 it done, or get it donated, or get portions of it  
21 underwritten by those companies that wish to help us in  
22 our objective, if that is allowed. I don't have the  
23 parameters and policies in front of me. Another manner  
24 might be to just - I know we have to convene individuals  
25 throughout the State, perhaps there are hotel industries

1 or others that may develop partnerships with the State in  
2 order to allow us to have free reduced access to space  
3 facilities and things of that nature.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. There was some duties  
5 and Executor -- Director positions that you had, and I  
6 wasn't clear on when you performed those duties, so I have  
7 a few of them, so I'll kind of list them off. When were  
8 you the Executive Director of the California Small School  
9 District Association?

10 DR. BROWN: When I retired from the District, I  
11 took the position there and I was there from 2006 to 2008,  
12 I believe.

13 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, so '06 to '08?

14 DR. BROWN: Yes.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And then the Department of  
16 California Food and Agricultural Surplus Food Director?

17 DR. BROWN: That was back in the 1970s and I  
18 believe around '75, '74 -

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Mid-'70s.

20 DR. BROWN: Mid-'70s. '73, '75.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: The Executive Director of the  
22 Sacramento YMCA?

23 DR. BROWN: That would have been in the '90s.  
24 Mid-'90s, I would say - '93. '96 - '93, '96, or '97.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. And the Executive

1 Director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Minority Business  
2 Development Center?

3 DR. BROWN: That was in the '80s. The United  
4 States Minority Business Development Center - mid-'80s.  
5 And that was funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. And I know this has  
7 been some time, so I have a few questions on some of those  
8 positions. What did you do as the Executive Director of  
9 the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Minority Business Development  
10 Center in tough times to help create viable businesses?

11 DR. BROWN: It is the U.S. Department of Commerce  
12 and the Minority Business Development Center is the  
13 technical name, MBDA. And Minority Business Development  
14 Centers, what I did at that time was to start the program  
15 from scratch. We won an actual grant to launch a Minority  
16 Business Development Center here in Sacramento. We had to  
17 find and service clients who were at least 51 percent  
18 minority-owned, or women-owned, and work with them in the  
19 areas of procurement, finding contracts for them, writing  
20 contract reports, finding grants, helping them with the  
21 financial concerns, or getting financial capital to be  
22 invested in their corporations. What I was able to do  
23 with them was to help them all write marketing plans,  
24 business plans and, in the first two years of operation,  
25 we secured more than - I believe it was \$25 million --

1 \$25-27 million in support of their operations. The  
2 buckets varied. The industries varied. The amounts  
3 awarded varied. And these were either contracts, or they  
4 were loans to those small businesses, and we also packaged  
5 loans on their behalf and we developed marketing campaigns  
6 on their behalf. The value of that was that \$25-27  
7 million, and we had to report this to the U.S. Minority  
8 Business Centers - Development Centers in Washington.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay, and so that \$25 million  
10 is a mid-'80s amount, so this is -

11 DR. BROWN: Yes, that's correct.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: In the Executive Director of  
13 the California Small School District Association capacity,  
14 when you traveled to rural areas and small towns, did you  
15 observe or learn anything that would help you as a  
16 Commissioner in the redistricting process?

17 DR. BROWN: Yes, I did. And I will be brief here.  
18 I learned the following: 1) that was my first exposure  
19 into the small rural towns. The small business - the  
20 Association of Small School Districts consisted of 750 of  
21 the small school districts in California, we only had  
22 1,100 school districts in the State of California, so this  
23 was two-thirds of them, and they all have less than 5,000  
24 students. I had been running a school district with  
25 55,000 students and these rural communities, what I

1 learned is that the decision-making processes were  
2 occurring fairly differently. They were tightly knitted,  
3 they made decisions most often in - they were more  
4 cohesive, and it was more relationship based. And there  
5 was a great need to really master the issues that  
6 confronted them, they made decisions based on their lens  
7 and whatever the overarching major concern was in their  
8 community, whether that was the cheese factory that  
9 supported them in that rural community, or whether it was  
10 a specific type of agricultural product that they were  
11 producing. But, as a result of that, their decision-  
12 making process included a large number - a large number of  
13 the population and they were very active in that decision  
14 making process. And they wanted to develop more  
15 relationships with whatever entity came in there first, as  
16 opposed to urban areas where we had this more long-term  
17 policy framework and you had different angles to place  
18 input in, and the machinery took hold; there, it was more  
19 of a people moving machinery, and I enjoyed it very much.  
20 And the decision-making process went more smoothly, and in  
21 a less complicated manner, and faster than in the urban  
22 areas that I had been accustomed to working with. So, I  
23 found it quite enjoyable.

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How do you think that  
25 knowledge that you've learned visiting those school

1 districts - and on this, I just want to remind everybody,  
2 was in 2006 through about 2008 -

3 DR. BROWN: Yes.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: -- so it is fairly recent -  
5 how that would help you as a Commissioner when you go out  
6 and talk to these communities or do outreach to these  
7 communities?

8 DR. BROWN: Well, all too often what I learned is  
9 that it is almost a knee-jerk reaction, having been born  
10 and raised here in Sacramento in an urban area, to take  
11 that urban lens and impose it on others. What that helped  
12 me to open my eyes about is that it is very important to  
13 listen to the different ways of making decisions, and to  
14 include voices in it that are often unheard, and that this  
15 big machinery that we have often encumbers that listening  
16 process. So, I think it has given me more effective  
17 listening skills -- although I thought I had pretty good  
18 ones -- that really rounded my abilities out, even more  
19 extended my reach in terms of being able to hear that  
20 feedback, look at it for what it was, and still accomplish  
21 an outcome without all the tedious or laborious machinery  
22 that we usually have. So, I really valued it.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: That will be my last question  
24 for now.

25 DR. BROWN: Thank you, Ms. Camacho.



1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good morning.

3 DR. BROWN: Good morning, Ms. Spano.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How are you?

5 DR. BROWN: I'm well.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You touched slightly on your  
7 letters of recommendation, one in particular you stated  
8 earlier that you are kind of out of the political  
9 involvement of your work, and now moving on to your  
10 foundation --

11 DR. BROWN: Yes.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: -- and other issues. I find  
13 it interesting, though, that you did seek a letter of  
14 recommendation from Congressman Lundgren. How can you  
15 assure this panel that he would not influence your  
16 decision-making as Commissioner would not be influenced by  
17 your interactions past, current, with elected officials or  
18 any interest groups?

19 DR. BROWN: Well, I think part of that is  
20 reflected in my decision to seek the letter from Mr.  
21 Lundgren. What I wanted to be able to demonstrate is that  
22 impartiality, that even though I am a Democrat, that I do  
23 command the respect of others who are Republican and can  
24 work with them, and that they understand my working  
25 procedure and policies and contributions, and that I have

1   that ability to bridge understanding between both sides.  
2   Be it as it may, this is a political process, it is never  
3   going to be able to extract itself from that, and I wanted  
4   to be able to demonstrate that, though I'm a little out of  
5   it and not really into the mainstream politics, I still  
6   can effectively establish relationships with both sides.  
7   It's important for me to - in everything that I do -  
8   remain impartial. It has been in all my decision-making  
9   as a Manager, that allows me to achieve the success I've  
10   had in the past not only in managing the projects that  
11   I've managed with the tremendous outcomes, but also in  
12   terms of fundraising because, just in terms of fundraising  
13   and grant writing, it's important to be able to be  
14   balanced, to get both sides to agree that, yes, you have  
15   what it takes that I want to support, and to motivate and  
16   inspire others. And my goal there was to make sure that I  
17   let you know, the Panel know, that I could be an effective  
18   link to positive communication and fair and impartial and  
19   deliberative with respect to how I make decisions.

20           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. If you were  
21   approached by any of these people outside an open meeting  
22   process, and they asked you, because they know you in the  
23   community, and they told you about their interests and  
24   needs, that they felt could be fulfilled if you would  
25   redraw the lines a certain way, how would you respond to

1    them?

2                   DR. BROWN:   Well, first and foremost, Mr. Ahmadi  
3    said that my legislative advisor would let me know exactly  
4    how that contact needs to take place, or could take place,  
5    or couldn't take place.   And I would abide by those rules.  
6    Secondly, I would expect them to abide by the same rules  
7    because they are professional politicians and have a lot  
8    more experience at what they can and cannot do, and should  
9    and should not do, better than I.   But most importantly,  
10   it is up to me to draw the parameters around myself in  
11   accordance with the rules and regulations and guidelines  
12   that I have been given, and to let them know that this is  
13   what I have to abide by, and of all people, those are the  
14   individuals who should respect that.

15                  PANEL MEMBER SPANO:   Thank you.   Let's talk about  
16   your Sacramento YWCA Executive Director work.

17                  DR. BROWN:   Yes.

18                  PANEL MEMBER SPANO:   You state in your  
19   application, "Finally, as the Executive Director of the  
20   Sacramento YWCA, I learned to appreciate the challenges  
21   faced by poor, gay, and lesbian communities, and women as  
22   they struggle to empower themselves."   What did this  
23   experience teach you about the challenges faced by the  
24   poor, the gay, the lesbian communities, and women?

25                  DR. BROWN:   Well, as you all know, the YWCA has an

1 illustrious history, but in current times, the YWCA is not  
2 as strong as it used to be, and it is losing ground in  
3 many states. Part of the reason is the efficacy of the  
4 movement that started the YWCA, and it is moving in a  
5 direction now of trying to provide services to the poor  
6 and disenfranchised, but missing some of the mark when  
7 internal dissention sometimes colors the outcomes. For  
8 example, the YWCA now is not the largest provider, as it  
9 used to be, of childcare in the United States, that  
10 largest provider of childcare between the two entities is  
11 the YMCA, so you would wonder, okay, what led up to this?  
12 But part of it has to do with the overall management  
13 structure, the ineffective fundraising that goes city by  
14 city by city, and what I can say about the experience here  
15 is, when I did pick up that agency as the Chief Executive  
16 Officer, it was a million dollars in the red, and when I  
17 left, it was \$4 million in the black.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Over how long?

19 DR. BROWN: Over about a four-year period.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Three years?

21 DR. BROWN: Yeah, a three to four-year period,  
22 about a three and a half year period. But what I learned  
23 was how to take all the varied concerns that stretch and  
24 tax each other and happen to focus on that common goal, of  
25 making the local YWCA effective during that time period,

1 and focusing on our programs such as cancer prevention,  
2 breast care prevention, after-school programs for the  
3 youth, and to take some of the other issues that were a  
4 little more challenging, and have gay, lesbian, straight,  
5 women, work on specific issues to solve those issues and  
6 problems, and achieve those outcomes while placing the  
7 more contentious issues on the side. And that's what I  
8 think I was able to achieve during my tenure there because  
9 we did grow, but prior to that time, the reason it fell  
10 into the million dollar deficit was because those  
11 contentious issues weren't mitigated in any way, and so,  
12 as a result, the entity had decayed a bit. And so, again,  
13 I think that's a demonstration of my strength and ability  
14 because the outcome, not only did we develop a more  
15 effective board during the time that I was there, but we  
16 were able to restore the efficacy of the company during  
17 the time that I was there, and the programs were funded.  
18 Also during my tenure, the agency had lost its  
19 accreditation before my tenure, within one and a half  
20 years of me being there, I had met all of the parameters  
21 to restore that entity back to its level of grandeur such  
22 that the National Office gave it - restored the  
23 accreditation. So, I think that shows the ability to lead  
24 a group and through fairly contentious movements, and to  
25 get that consensus that was needed in order to achieve

1 those accomplishments.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me a little bit  
3 about - because you were in the red by a lot, a million  
4 dollars, and you said they were faced with a lot of  
5 contentious issues, a lot of challenges faced by a certain  
6 segment of the population, can you describe some of the  
7 challenges and contentious issues that you faced, as you  
8 started to say --

9 DR. BROWN: Well, you know, the typical challenges  
10 when people misunderstand each other. You have a big  
11 group that is more business oriented that just wants to do  
12 the work from a management framework; you have those that  
13 refuse to deal with developing a basic understanding of  
14 gay and lesbian issues, or have that level of comfort with  
15 dealing with those issues and what their needs and  
16 concerns are. Instead of providing for them, we had, for  
17 example, a women's residence on the third and fourth  
18 floors, and that residence should have been populated by  
19 people from all backgrounds, gay, straight, lesbian, what  
20 have you; well, some had certain concerns about, well,  
21 this is only for a certain type of individual, and it was  
22 important for me to make sure that they knew it was  
23 available to all individuals, it had nothing to do with  
24 their sexual backgrounds, or color, or what have you, you  
25 couldn't use it for just a certain use, or refrain from

1 making a repair because certain individuals or certain  
2 types of individuals were using the facility. We made  
3 partnerships happen with *Sacramento Bee* and others to get  
4 that facility restored, bring it up to Code, and open it  
5 up to all people from all walks of life, sexual  
6 persuasions, and keep it afloat, and provide equal  
7 services to all that resided there so that they could  
8 begin to make the transition from whatever the challenge  
9 they were facing at that time and to provide support  
10 services for them to go from that challenge, whether it  
11 was unemployment, or a mental handicap, or physical  
12 handicap at that time, to help resolve that and get them  
13 the support services they needed to go into other support  
14 programs, and that really was the issue, not the issue of  
15 who controlled what managerially, or which segment of the  
16 population deserved to receive the services, or not. Does  
17 that answer your question?

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah, that helps, that helps,  
19 because I'm curious. You were able to get funding for  
20 them also.

21 DR. BROWN: Yes, absolutely.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And as a result of your work,  
23 of people being able to be aware of these issues. How did  
24 you get the funding?

25 DR. BROWN: Well, at the time, we did not have an

1 effective program for women having health problems, and  
2 breast cancer was one of the issues that we wanted to work  
3 with, so I was able to develop support for what we called  
4 at the time our Encore Breast Cancer Support Program that  
5 allowed us to provide the services, bring in a program,  
6 but it also brought in operational income for the  
7 facility. We were able to work together to bring in after  
8 school programs using a variety of funds to get those  
9 things there, and also, then, to restore funding for the  
10 repair of the facility because it had fallen into  
11 disrepair, plumbing was very old, and we worked with local  
12 corporations to get donations to restore the plumbing  
13 facilities and others so that we could provide the  
14 residency and just deal with the problems one-by-one, face  
15 by face, have them focus on those issues, resolve those  
16 issues, restore the facility to its previous grace, and  
17 functionality, and people became aware of its impartiality  
18 and started using the facility once again to generate  
19 revenue and help sustain it.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How did the challenges you  
21 faced by working with the poor, the gay, lesbian  
22 communities, and women, how did this experience - how does  
23 this experience influence your decision-making as a  
24 Commissioner?

25 DR. BROWN: I think it makes it more balanced. I



1 think it makes it more empathetic. I believe it makes me  
2 more of an advocate for their causes, and I believe that  
3 is important because, if other people had had the depth of  
4 experience that I was able to have there, I do believe  
5 they would think differently about those issues and look  
6 for common ground in a faster, swifter way, rather than  
7 resisting it so that the outcomes take longer to achieve,  
8 particularly since the outcomes are desired by everyone -  
9 a better facility, after school support services, better  
10 services to women of all types, those are the outcomes  
11 that they really did want to have, and the worrying  
12 because of political differences, or differences about  
13 religious beliefs, or the rights that populations have,  
14 make it difficult to have discussions if it remains mired  
15 in that, rather than achieving the common objective. So,  
16 I think I was instrumental in getting the focus on the  
17 issues, at the same time, developing the understanding  
18 about how others thought and how important it was to value  
19 how others thought in order to achieve the outcome of  
20 improving the plumbing, or establishing the after school  
21 program, whatever that outcome was.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you. In your  
23 Supplemental - your amendment to your application, you  
24 mentioned that you also work as a CEO for Pathworks?

25 DR. BROWN: Yes.

1           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Since 2005 while you are  
2 doing your Nehemiah Foundation work. Can you talk about  
3 the Pathworks? And the organization?

4           DR. BROWN: Yeah, well, Pathworks is a name that I  
5 use, it's my own private business, a corporation, a  
6 privately held corporation, because I am such a good grant  
7 writer that other community-based organizations always ask  
8 me, "Can you read mine?" Or, "Would you write mine?" And  
9 I did not want to do that without having a corporate  
10 umbrella to protect me as I took on some of the jobs for  
11 them. And I've been instrumental in helping a variety of  
12 community-based organizations get their funding and they  
13 love me for it, so I continue to do it. And I do it on a  
14 case-by-case basis and fairly in a limited basis now that  
15 I'm working full-time with the Nehemiah Corporation.

16           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The Nehemiah. Let's talk  
17 about Nehemiah. You are the Executive Director from 2009  
18 to current?

19           DR. BROWN: Yes, I started there in May of 2009 as  
20 the Executive Director of the Nehemiah Community  
21 Foundation. As you know, the Nehemiah Corporation of  
22 America is a group of about five different corporations,  
23 about some profit, some nonprofit, that work together to  
24 achieve common social outcomes, you know, to transform  
25 lives and improve communities.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Five minutes.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

3 DR. BROWN: Thank you. So, the Community  
4 Foundation that I run is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity and  
5 it takes some of the funding generated from the profit  
6 making side of the company, in particularly the real  
7 estate development entities - I am sure you are familiar  
8 with Township Nine here in Sacramento, which is the  
9 Riverfront Property, and there were several other programs  
10 that we ran in the last 11 years that Nehemiah has been  
11 around, particularly the Down Payment Assistance Program,  
12 and others, and channels some of that funding through to  
13 share with others. So, the Community Foundation provides  
14 gifts in the form of grants to --

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I am sorry, provides what?

16 DR. BROWN: Gifts, g-i-f-t-s --

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, gifts, okay.

18 DR. BROWN: -- yes, in the form of grants, to  
19 community-based organizations who either asked for  
20 sponsorships for various community operations such as the  
21 Mayor's Summer Reading Program, and various cancer  
22 programs and Cottage Housing, and other entities here on  
23 homelessness, to achieve their objectives, and basically  
24 those were the social missions and social purpose that is  
25 either transforming lives or transforming communities in

1 some way. We worked with them to make sure that those  
2 gifts are monitored and that we follow generally accepted  
3 accounting principles in making those gifts.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What is it named after,  
5 Nehemiah?

6 DR. BROWN: Well, Nehemiah is actually a chapter  
7 in the Bible.

8 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, okay.

9 DR. BROWN: And Nehemiah Corporation itself was  
10 set up by a Baptist Minister about 11 years ago, and  
11 actually, yeah, I guess that is the portion of the Bible  
12 that he was referring to when the walls came tumbling down  
13 and to solidify strength and purpose in helping  
14 communities achieve their goals, transform their lives.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Exactly what the mission is  
16 of the Foundation.

17 DR. BROWN: Exactly.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. What are your  
19 responsibilities as Executive Director?

20 DR. BROWN: Well, I monitor all of the donations  
21 that are made, both for the sponsorships and in terms of  
22 the grants for the entities that I mentioned to you  
23 earlier. I also manage the Nehemiah Emerging Leader  
24 Program, the leadership program that I talked to Mr.  
25 Ahmadi about earlier, and then we have a third program

1 that - a third initiative of the Foundation, which is  
2 called the Financial Fitness Program --

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

4 DR. BROWN: -- and what we are doing is we are  
5 developing a mentor - a Financial Mentoring Program for  
6 poor and low-income individuals who are in need of  
7 financial recovery, and it's more of a financial mentoring  
8 initiative, and we are developing that, as well.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Is that different than the  
10 Wealth Empowerment Initiative?

11 DR. BROWN: It actually is the same, we just  
12 recently changed the name for marketing purposes because  
13 Wealth Empowerment is such a long one, so Financial  
14 Fitness is a little easier.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Financial Fitness for  
16 recovery, for people that are --

17 DR. BROWN: Yes, so the website is at  
18 [befinanciallyfit.org](http://befinanciallyfit.org) if you would like to see more detail  
19 on that. Same two programs.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

21 DR. BROWN: It just changed the names.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Recently.

23 DR. BROWN: Yes.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How will this experience  
25 support your work as a Commissioner?

1 DR. BROWN: Well, you know, I believe that when  
2 we're helping others, what it does it is to be able to go  
3 back to that all important premise of mine about listening  
4 deeply, and finding out what the needs are, in order to be  
5 able to maintain some level of objectivity with respect to  
6 achieving the outcomes. I helped through the Nehemiah  
7 Foundation others achieve their outcomes of helping the  
8 poor, the downtrodden, those in need, and I will be able  
9 to know what some of those base underlying issues are if  
10 any of those communities of interest approached the  
11 Commission. The other thing I think it does is it helps  
12 me to be able to continue to be objective, to listen with  
13 empathy, to work in an objective manner, and also at the  
14 Community Foundation, we use a variety of evaluation  
15 tools, not as complicated or complex as I used even for my  
16 dissertation, or for other things, but I believe that  
17 those help sharpen my axe, so to speak, so that I'll be  
18 more responsive in the work that I'm doing and be able to  
19 continue to use the research skills, as well as the  
20 problem solving, critical thinking skills that I used  
21 there.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, thank you.

23 DR. BROWN: Okay.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, are there  
25 follow-up questions?

1 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. Dr. Brown, we don't  
4 have a lot of time, I hope that you have an opportunity to  
5 give a closing statement.

6 How does a person get a letter of recommendation  
7 from a busy Congressman?

8 DR. BROWN: Well, I think that comes from years of  
9 experience, it comes from the ability to be able to  
10 clearly document strengths through the years, it comes  
11 from a long record of productive outcomes, that they're  
12 familiar with. I believe it also comes from the ability  
13 to have already developed a baseline level of trust with  
14 that individual, and I believe it comes from positive  
15 relationships also with others with whom I'm affiliated  
16 with, the Nehemiah Community Association, the Sacramento  
17 Observer, and just ultimately being around in this  
18 community for all the years of my life. And that letter  
19 could have easily been written by Dave Jones, or Darryl  
20 Steinberg, or any one of the others who have seen my work  
21 in the community.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It is possible that, if you  
23 are seated on the Commission, the law may change and you  
24 may be drawing Congressional District lines. Do you have  
25 a concern that the public may perceive you as having some

1 sort of conflict, given that you have a letter of  
2 recommendation and a close relationship with a member of  
3 Congress?

4 DR. BROWN: Yeah, I do, but they may also have a  
5 problem with the letter written by Alice Huffman from the  
6 NAACP. We are all aware of what is going on right now  
7 with the Mosque in New York, people are entitled to their  
8 positions and to their way of thinking about things, we  
9 all have biases, we all have prejudices. As I mentioned  
10 to you earlier in the presentation, my goal there was to  
11 show the ability to be able to be recognized as the  
12 trusted leader by both sides of the equation, both  
13 Republican and Democrat. I could have easily have done  
14 the same thing with two different Republican and  
15 Democratic religious leaders, or a gay and lesbian group,  
16 or others. But I defer to the ability of everyone to be  
17 able to discern earnestness and trustworthiness and  
18 fairness and impartiality in an individual, and I just  
19 assert that that I am in my work through the years in this  
20 market, attest to that. And the only purpose for that was  
21 to demonstrate the ability to have support and to be  
22 listened and trusted by both sides of the equation.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, we've heard a lot from  
24 the public about "the Citizens Commission is supposed to  
25 be comprised of just regular people," and I've heard you



1 mention relationships with Mr. Lundgren and Ms. Matsui,  
2 and Mr. Jones and Mr. Steinberg, how do you convince the  
3 public that you're just a regular gal?

4 DR. BROWN: I think they just need to talk to my  
5 friends and family and I find it entertaining because I've  
6 never been appointed to any political commission before,  
7 I've never sought one before, it hasn't been of interest  
8 to me. My interest is helping others, that's why I've  
9 been an Assistant Superintendent for so many years,  
10 particularly with respect to education, education is my  
11 issue. So, the way that I would put someone at ease is to  
12 say, look at my track record or performance and look at  
13 all of the variety of causes that I've supported through  
14 the years. And through that, you'll see Dr. Melissa  
15 Brown, who is concerned about her community in such a way  
16 that she never ran for public office herself. This is  
17 just an opportunity that I'm seeking because I look to  
18 give back in a fair and impartial way some of the gifts  
19 that I've been given to share with people in the community  
20 that I think I represent fairly and honestly, and to use  
21 the education that I have on behalf of others to do  
22 something meaningful in my semi-retired position while I  
23 have the time to do it, and to do something meaningful  
24 before something happens to me, or that inevitable period  
25 at the end of my contributions, but I just want to give

1 something back, and I want to give it back in a way  
2 because I know I can be fair and impartial. I've had  
3 blessings of working with a variety of high powered people  
4 through the years, but I came from a very humble community  
5 here in our Sacramento area, and I lived in a very poor  
6 neighborhood, that really doesn't make a difference in  
7 terms of trustworthiness, but it does make a difference in  
8 terms of the background and the understanding and the  
9 experiences that I've had to be fair, and to know that  
10 that need to be fair and to have equitable distribution of  
11 resources is important to me, and I want to make sure that  
12 I use the talents and the skills that I have to translate  
13 the concerns that that population, in particular, has in a  
14 meaningful way in this process, and that is all I seek to  
15 do.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It's a real challenge,  
17 isn't it, because a life's worth of accomplishments is  
18 almost a double-edged sword to some people who view that  
19 as beholdenness [sic] or something, right? I mean -

20 DR. BROWN: I've never been beholden to any  
21 particular group because what comes to me first is the  
22 ability to be of service. Servant leadership, if you will  
23 ask anyone who has ever been associated with me, is all  
24 that I'm about. If I wanted the high powered either -  
25 even legislative or corporate executive positions, given

1 the age that I now am, I would have pursued them. I never  
2 did. There is a reason I never did. I love doing and  
3 giving back to the community and staying in my community,  
4 I was born and raised here. Even though I developed some  
5 of those skills, I've always used them on behalf of the  
6 community. And with your blessing, Panel, I'll continue  
7 to do that because that is what I like to do. If I had  
8 wanted the high powered executive life, believe you me,  
9 I'd be there. I'm not.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, you mentioned that  
11 you're a local Sacramentoan and semi-retired, so I just  
12 want to make sure that, if you're selected to serve on the  
13 Commission, you are prepared to start work November 18<sup>th</sup> or  
14 19<sup>th</sup>?

15 DR. BROWN: Absolutely.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I had one other question  
17 about your Form 700. You have a source of income from  
18 Move the Mountain, Inc. I didn't know what that was.

19 DR. BROWN: Grant writing.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Pardon - oh, grant writing,  
21 okay.

22 DR. BROWN: One of my clients - you mentioned  
23 that, you know, it's one of my clients, and given the  
24 level of work that I did for him that year -

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What is the organization?

1 DR. BROWN: Oh, the organization, Move the  
2 Mountain itself, is an organization which brings together  
3 groups of poor individuals in poverty, to empower them to  
4 get themselves out of poverty, to move their mountain.  
5 And it's a national organization, and they have been doing  
6 well throughout the United States, working with poor and  
7 disenfranchised individuals to work collectively on  
8 getting themselves out of poverty by forming networks of  
9 groups who are challenged financially, low income  
10 individuals, and mentoring and matching them with higher  
11 income individuals, who help them with information and  
12 advice so that they can take the steps that they need to  
13 take to move from one level of poverty, beyond to the  
14 next, to the next, to the next, and ultimately out of  
15 poverty. It's a wonderful group.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It reminds me of the hymn,  
17 "Just give me the strength to climb." We only have just a  
18 couple of seconds left. Panelists, do you have questions?  
19 Ten seconds?

20 DR. BROWN: Only 10 seconds. Well, in 10 seconds,  
21 if I only have 10 seconds, I'd like to say I am here  
22 because of my earnest desire to be of service to the  
23 people of California -

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Oh, I'm so sorry, I have to  
25 stop you. Thank you so much for coming to see us, Dr.

1 Brown.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

5 DR. BROWN: Thank you so much.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Let's recess until 10:59.

7 (Recess until 10:45 a.m.)

8 (Back on the record at 10:59 a.m.)

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It is 10:59 and all  
10 panelists are present, so is our next Applicant, Ms. Maria  
11 Blanco. Welcome, Ms. Blanco. Are you ready to begin?

12 MS. BLANCO: I am.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Very good. Please start  
14 the clock. What specific skills do you believe a good  
15 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills, which do  
16 you possess? Which do you not possess, and how will you  
17 compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that  
18 would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of  
19 the duties of a Commissioner?

20 MS. BLANCO: I think, because of the vast  
21 information that's going to be presented to the  
22 Commissioners in terms of data, testimony, law, that being  
23 able to absorb information rapidly and well is an  
24 important skill. I think good listening is going to be a  
25 good skill, you know, we'll be hearing a lot of testimony

1 in the field and really knowing how to truly listen, not  
2 sort of be anticipating, you know, the next thing, but  
3 stopping and listening is going to be very important. I  
4 think that being comfortable with data and statistics,  
5 technology, is going to be very important; I know there is  
6 a lot that gets used in the process. Oh, two more things,  
7 I think it's going to be really important, it is a large  
8 group, actually, 14, to be making such important  
9 decisions, I think being able to be collaborative will be  
10 very important, or not a lot can get done. And, of  
11 course, the one that was outlined from the very beginning  
12 in all of your materials is the impartiality, that I think  
13 that is maybe, if there was one overriding characteristic,  
14 it would be impartiality.

15 As far as which of those qualities do I think I  
16 possess, I think I possess pretty much all of them, you  
17 know, because my career, the kinds of jobs I've done, I've  
18 had to be extremely analytical, I've had to analyze a lot  
19 of data, I've had cases that have involved data and  
20 statistics. I think, you know, I think it's hard to  
21 really get people to believe that any one of us is  
22 impartial because nobody is truly impartial, but I think  
23 that, if you talk to people that I've worked on difficult  
24 things and controversial things, that it would tell you  
25 that I am very impartial, that I base my decisions on

1 facts and not beliefs, and preconceived beliefs.

2 I think the part, the one thing that I may fall  
3 down on is I'm not sure I'm as organized as I need to be  
4 with material, frankly. And I'm aware of that, and  
5 unfortunately, over the last few years, I've had the  
6 benefit of somebody staff me, a good administrative  
7 assistant, so I've even fallen more into the habit of not  
8 doing everything myself. So, I think I would have to be  
9 aware of that and hopefully maybe have staff help a little  
10 bit with some of the classifying of materials. And all of  
11 us would have to sort of figure out maybe a joint system  
12 of filing, or you know, that is uniform, that keeps us all  
13 organized.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
15 from your personal experience where you had to work with  
16 others to resolve a conflict or a difference of opinion.  
17 Please describe the issue and explain your role in  
18 addressing and resolving the conflict. If you were  
19 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
20 Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that  
21 may arise among the Commissioners.

22 MS. BLANCO: I'll go through the example fast  
23 because I think the latter is really important to think  
24 about. The most recent thing I can think about is, last  
25 year, there was a bill introduced in the Legislature here

1 by the NAACP that tried to limit the use of the hiring of  
2 bilingual employees by City Governments, and their concern  
3 was that hiring policies which said bilingual preferred,  
4 strongly preferred, or required, were actually being used  
5 to discriminate against African-Americans, and  
6 particularly in the public sector where there was a large  
7 employment of that community. And when they introduced  
8 this, the groups that work a lot on issues of language,  
9 minorities, and access to healthcare, and 911, and who  
10 feel very strongly about language access, got very upset  
11 and it was heading for a big confrontation, and a lot of  
12 public - very public acrimony. So, I actually got a call  
13 from the NAACP and they asked me, could I help mediate  
14 this and find a working solution because they felt that I,  
15 because of my work in coalition work for years, understood  
16 the issue they were raising, and also I was used to being  
17 an Employment Lawyer. And the language folks felt that I  
18 understood their issue because I had worked on that issue.  
19 So, I read everything on both sides, their concerns,  
20 gathered some facts about employment, and wrote an  
21 alternative bill that we then - that I took to a meeting  
22 of all the parties, and which we agreed upon, and then I  
23 sort of left it to the Sacramento folks to, you know, see  
24 it through, and I just got called to consult every once in  
25 a while. Unfortunately, the bill died and - but not



1 because of any of the people involved, because of some of  
2 the elected. So, there is now a good - everybody is  
3 committed to trying to do this again, together. So, that  
4 is one example.

5 I think one of the things to do with the conflict,  
6 with the Commissioners, which I am assuming there will be  
7 some, and there will be some big ones and some small ones,  
8 it might be important to agree ahead of time on some rules  
9 for what -- the body itself make some rules for itself  
10 about how it will approach conflict. You know, will they  
11 - they have to decide how they're going to vote, if  
12 they're going to strive for consensus, what they do when  
13 there's small dissent vs. even dissents, you know, half  
14 and half. So, I think it may take some time, but I think  
15 it would be worthwhile trying to anticipate that there  
16 will be conflict, and trying to set some rules ahead of  
17 time. I think that one of those rules, and regardless of  
18 whether we do a rule or not, that using the text of the  
19 Voters FIRST Act, and sort of agreeing that that's the  
20 guiding text, you know, and everybody agreeing to that, I  
21 think, would be helpful. We might even - I know this  
22 sounds a little hokey, but it might even be worth it to  
23 sort of do a contract with each other to be collaborative,  
24 you know, that we agree not to put our whatever - to have  
25 any other interests other than the interests that are laid

1 out in Prop. 11 guide us.

2 I can give you examples if I think of some of the  
3 big conflicts that might come up, I think there might be a  
4 conflict right at the start about whether you start from  
5 scratch with a blank map, or you start with existing  
6 lines. I can see conflicts around whether a District that  
7 is not a majority minority district, because it is 48, but  
8 you can see that, in three years, because you've looked at  
9 the demographic data, it will be, what do you do? You  
10 know, vs. a community of interest and something else  
11 because you still don't quite have a majority minority  
12 district. I can see those things. And I think we should  
13 maybe thing about them as a Commission ahead of when we  
14 start and start figuring out how we're going to deal with  
15 issues like that.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
17 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will  
18 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
19 the Commission's work to harm the State, and if so, in  
20 what ways?

21 MS. BLANCO: I think probably the biggest positive  
22 impact the Commission can have, and it's kind of lofty,  
23 but I think if it's done well, it will do that, it will  
24 restore some trust in government because, even though the  
25 Commissioners won't be themselves Government people, this

1 whole process has, you know, been handled by this office  
2 and by the voters of the State, and if it works well,  
3 people will think that we still know how to do things  
4 well, and then there will be credibility in the process of  
5 government. I think if we do it well, hopefully we'll be  
6 able to get back to some key concepts like communities of  
7 interest, rather than incumbency protection. That will be  
8 very good for the citizens of California to see that we  
9 can do that, and that's how we literally reapportion, on  
10 those grounds.

11           The only negative I could think of when I read the  
12 question is, I think there are going to be really really  
13 high expectations of the Commission. I hear it all the  
14 time. I hear that, "Oh, this is going to create  
15 competitive Districts." And while it may create more than  
16 we have now, for sure, you know, some of those issues are  
17 geographic, people that live in certain parts of the state  
18 and they gravitated to certain neighborhoods, and I think  
19 that if people - people may be disillusioned if they don't  
20 see enough change. And that would contribute to already  
21 the existing lack of trust. So I think the very high  
22 expectations are - we're going to have to figure out how  
23 to manage that.

24           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: With about eight minutes  
25 remaining, describe a situation where you had to work as a

1 part of a group to achieve a common goal, tell us about  
2 the goal, describe your role within the group, and tell us  
3 how the group worked or did not work collaboratively to  
4 achieve this goal. If you're selected to serve on the  
5 Citizens Redistricting Commission, tell us what you would  
6 do to foster collaboration among the Commissioners and  
7 ensure the Commission meets its legal deadlines.

8 MS. BLANCO: Real quickly, the example, because I  
9 know I don't have a lot of time left. When I was the  
10 Director at the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, that  
11 organization's mission statement, because it was founded  
12 in the '60s, and it was a San Francisco Bay Area  
13 organization, was that its primary focus was improving the  
14 lives of African Americans, and dealing with  
15 discrimination issues of African-Americans, that was its  
16 founding - it was founded right after Martin Luther King  
17 was killed and that was what they organized around. Over  
18 the years, it changed tremendously as more groups arrived  
19 in the City and more issues came up, immigrant issues,  
20 other, you know, and so, by the time I got there, we had a  
21 small entrepreneur program to help small entrepreneurs  
22 build their businesses.

23 We had immigration work we did, you know, and  
24 there was a strong feeling in the community that we had  
25 veered from the original mission. The staff felt that,

1 too, and the Board felt that, too. And I set about trying  
2 to readjust the programs in line with the mission, and not  
3 just me, the staff agreed that we wanted to do this, the  
4 Board wanted to do it. It was difficult, it was very  
5 difficult, people had their area of work that they were  
6 already working in, that didn't fall within that mission.  
7 And so, while they were verbally supportive of what we  
8 were engaged in, there was a lot of sort of hidden  
9 recalcitrance to do it. More with staff, the Board was  
10 actually more on board with this. So, we had to - I got  
11 myself an expert that helped me, coached me on how to deal  
12 with what I anticipated were going to be the problems, and  
13 we did a lot of background reading, and I made people  
14 actually sort of do the reading for the area that was not  
15 their area, to sort of take them out of their comfort zone  
16 and put themselves in other people's shoes. And I think  
17 we accomplished it, but it was very difficult and took  
18 about three years to get there with people, you know,  
19 dragging their feet, or undermining things without really  
20 saying they were, and then we had to set goals and  
21 timetables and proof that we were really going with the  
22 new program, and it got very strict about their docket and  
23 their work and their reports had to always tell me what  
24 they were doing in that regard.

25 I think with the Commission, we should do some - I

1 think we should do retreats maybe ahead of time and maybe  
2 at different points throughout the process. I think we  
3 need to do some team building so that, when we hit the  
4 hard points, we've now established a working relationship  
5 and there's trust, and we are a team as opposed to coming  
6 into the process as individuals and keeping that identity,  
7 and I think that could really help and I would like, with  
8 the conflict resolution, we should agree with that at the  
9 beginning and that we are going to try and do some set  
10 activities throughout the process to keep - to build the  
11 team and to stay a team. And I guess that's what I'll say  
12 about that.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
14 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
15 from all over California who come from very different  
16 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
17 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
18 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
19 in interacting with the public.

20 MS. BLANCO: Well, I would say my whole - pretty  
21 much my entire work life has been a very public career.  
22 Almost every job I've done, I've interacted a lot with the  
23 public, either testifying, receiving testimony in  
24 different jobs, going out to Town Hall meetings, and  
25 meeting with people, Press Conferences that included the

1 public, as well as media. So, I feel very comfortable,  
2 that's really always been in my job description, every job  
3 I've had, one theme was "how do you interact with the  
4 public?" And heavy interaction with the public was  
5 required for every job I had, so I think I listen well, I  
6 think I don't come in with pre-formed ideas, and I  
7 actually really like the interaction with the public.  
8 Some people are shy, or nervous, or not very comfortable  
9 with the public, I like it. It kind of invigorates me.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, thank you. Good morning, Ms.  
12 Blanco.

13 MS. BLANCO: Good morning.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: I have a quick follow-up question in  
15 regards to your response to question 3. You mentioned  
16 that, from your recollection of the responses from the  
17 Applicant pool, or Applicants, you think that some of them  
18 have very high expectations of the Commission. What are  
19 your expectations?

20 MS. BLANCO: And I meant of the public, not so  
21 much of the Applicants.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay.

23 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, I meant - the public, I think,  
24 is watching really carefully, as well they should.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you for correcting me on

1 that.

2 MS. BLANCO: Yeah. So, but do you still want me  
3 to --

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, please. What are your  
5 expectations?

6 MS. BLANCO: My expectation is that we will do a  
7 really good job. And by that, I mean that we will work  
8 well together and that we will actually be able to draw  
9 some lines that make sense for people's daily lives, that  
10 they feel that their representative really represents  
11 them, and that that'll take us a tiny step towards trust  
12 in government again.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: So wouldn't that make the Districts  
14 more competitive?

15 MS. BLANCO: Well, you know, this is what I mean  
16 about the high expectations in that regard. I think, now,  
17 there is no competitiveness, I mean zero, I mean, maybe  
18 there are one or two Districts that may be. But even  
19 when, like the 1992 Special Master did his map, which is a  
20 really good decision, which I think all the new  
21 Commissioners should read, you still end up - people still  
22 - California will still have, for lack of a better  
23 description, red zones and blue zones. You know what I  
24 mean? That's - you're not going to change where people  
25 live, and sometimes people actually live in certain



1 places, move to a certain location, because they take that  
2 into account, they want to be with like-minded political  
3 people, as well. Now, people are moving around a lot in  
4 different parts and, you know, shifting back and forth in  
5 some areas, but I think some things -- you won't be able  
6 to do a lot about geography, for example. If you want to  
7 really follow, you know, compactness, contiguity, you  
8 know, communities of interest, there are some geographic  
9 zones that you may not be able to make more competitive  
10 and that's - you know, I think it will be more, but I  
11 don't think - the expectation, I think, is that all of a  
12 sudden we'll have every District will be wide open in the  
13 Primaries, and they'll always be in play; I don't know  
14 that that can happen, given the history and geography of  
15 California.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: So you're not that optimistic,  
17 then?

18 MS. BLANCO: No, no, I think we can increase the  
19 competitiveness, I do. And I don't know exactly until I  
20 see this, where. No, I think we can. I mean, when you  
21 look at the Rose report that they did about how many years  
22 it's declined, I think there have been periods when it was  
23 more competitive, but I don't think you can have every  
24 District be competitive.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: So, you mean we have to have more

1 realistic expectations based on the limitations, that  
2 certain factors contribute to the decision-making.

3 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, I do.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much. Let me ask you  
5 a question in regards to your application material, your  
6 past activities. When Counsel at MALDEF, you worked on  
7 the California redistricting after the 2000 Census.

8 MS. BLANCO: Correct.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: You reviewed the Census data and  
10 proposed maps for the City and County of San Francisco.

11 MS. BLANCO: Uh huh.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: You heard testimony and you worked  
13 with the legislators, and you presented information on  
14 communities of interest. So, you had this involvement  
15 with the redistricting effort the last time. Why do you  
16 want to do it again?

17 MS. BLANCO: Because that one didn't work. I  
18 mean, that's only partially a joke. I mean, MALDEF put so  
19 much time into that effort, so much time. We had people  
20 out doing community meetings, gathering stories about, you  
21 know, communities of interest, really being, I thought,  
22 incredibly thoughtful. And in adjusting numbers, looking  
23 at compactness, also the Voting Rights Act, and we did an  
24 amazing amount of work, even went to the Legislators,  
25 explained to them why we saw this and this, and then

1 everything happened in a back room, you know, in the last  
2 two days. And that was very frustrating to see that. So,  
3 I'm motivated to make sure that doesn't happen.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: So, do you have any certain  
5 expectations about certain districts that you're concerned  
6 about?

7 MS. BLANCO: No, and I haven't really looked at  
8 that so far. I guess there is no - and we don't have data  
9 yet about --

10 CHAIR AHMADI: But it sounds like you are not  
11 happy with the way that the final lines were drawn the  
12 last time.

13 MS. BLANCO: Well, I will tell you, primarily I  
14 was offended by the process, the lack of process, and the  
15 lack of open process, with how that was done. And the way  
16 things happened, it really was clear that both major  
17 parties had decided that this was about protecting  
18 incumbency, and they just started to do, "I'm an  
19 incumbent, you're an incumbent, we agree." And so the  
20 process is, in some ways, may biggest concern about the  
21 last round. In terms of the lines themselves, there were  
22 some districts, in particular, that I found problematic  
23 and one of them, actually, it's no secret that MALDEF sued  
24 on it, you know, Congressman Berman's District in the  
25 Valley, you know, was a real splitting of the Latino vote

1 and basically because he didn't want to run a primary  
2 against somebody. We lost. But, I don't have any  
3 districts in mind. I mean, I'll probably look at that  
4 district maybe more closely, but I don't think so, I just  
5 think I've got to look at the data and where the shifts  
6 are happening demographically, and you know, one shift  
7 leads to another shift. So, I'm not looking at any  
8 districts, in particular.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: In your efforts, were you focusing  
10 more on one particular minority group?

11 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, I should have said that from  
12 the beginning. The stated goal for MALDEF as an  
13 organization that represented Latinos was to see where  
14 there had been growth in Latino population, that it be  
15 taken into account, and that, if it had grown to a certain  
16 point, that the maps try and maximize representation. And  
17 so, in some ways, the places that we looked at were where  
18 we knew there had been big population growth, you know, of  
19 this community. But, I want to clarify, we from the very  
20 beginning decided to work together with one of the major  
21 Asian organizations that was interested in this process,  
22 as well, and with the African-American organization that  
23 was working on this process, and we actually put together  
24 joint maps, all the three groups put forward the exact  
25 same map.

1           CHAIR AHMADI:   Which organizations?

2           MS. BLANCO:   It was the Asian-American Legal  
3   Defense - no, it was Asian-Pacific American Legal Center  
4   in LA, APAC, and at the time, the NAACP Legal Offices had  
5   an office in LA, and those three organizations agreed, and  
6   so we, you know, I was very proud of us, you know, we  
7   tried to hammer out a lot of problem areas that we saw  
8   could be controversial between those different groups  
9   because, especially Asian and Latino groups had growth,  
10   but that was - it wasn't just a map for Latinos that we  
11   presented, ultimately, to the Legislature, it involved  
12   three groups.

13          CHAIR AHMADI:   So it sounds like it was not  
14   limited to the San Francisco City and County --

15          MS. BLANCO:   No, that was for the whole state and  
16   the Congressional maps, as well.   I worked on the San  
17   Francisco because I lived there and I got asked to - they  
18   had similar issues on a smaller scale in San Francisco  
19   with the growing Asian population, diminishing African-  
20   American population, White population being concentrated  
21   in certain neighborhoods, and so I worked on trying to  
22   sort out those things with the San Francisco Commission.

23          CHAIR AHMADI:   Okay.   In your application, you  
24   also mention that you advised the legislative staff when  
25   they seek your assistance.   Do you maintain a close

1 contact relationship with the legislators or legislative  
2 staff? How do you assist them?

3 MS. BLANCO: Well, with term limits, I really  
4 don't. Last time I was here was six years ago in  
5 Sacramento, so I really don't know any of the - there may  
6 be a couple of people, it's amazing, there are a couple of  
7 people that I still know in the Legislature, but, really,  
8 most of them have termed out, both in the Assembly and the  
9 Senate. What I get asked is like this thing that just  
10 happened, what I just described with this bill that  
11 involved the NAACP, and language. I'll get asked to work  
12 on something like that. I get calls from people I don't  
13 know, like there is a new Assemblyman Hernandez, I think,  
14 and his staff called me because they had an education bill  
15 that they wanted me to talk about, to testify about as an  
16 expert on some education issues. I think that is the only  
17 time, really, since I left Sacramento. I think that is  
18 the last time I testified. So, it's kind of more people  
19 in and out of Sacramento still know me, and so, if there  
20 is something that is down my alley in terms of expertise,  
21 I get asked, but I don't really have any relationships  
22 anymore, really, here.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: You mentioned that there are a  
24 couple of people that you still know. Who are they?

25 MS. BLANCO: Yeah. I know Senator Cedillo. I

1 know, I think, he's now - what do they call that - what is  
2 the Pro Tem? I don't remember what that official name --

3 CHAIR AHMADI: That's fine. But you have --

4 MS. BLANCO: Darrell Steinberg. I just saw him  
5 because I'm on the Board of the Public Policy Institute of  
6 California and he was at - he came to speak to us. And  
7 then this person that asked me to do the testimony,  
8 Hernandez. So I think those are the only three, really, I  
9 know anymore.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: So, what is your relationship with  
11 these three? Is this like a personal level --

12 MS. BLANCO: No, it's what I was describing. They  
13 know - when I worked here, I worked here for about three  
14 years, and I think I got a reputation for being very  
15 thorough and thoughtful, and so it's almost like they call  
16 me sometimes for either technical advice because I'm a  
17 lawyer and they know I know stuff they need to know, or I  
18 know an issue, I have subject matter expertise, and then I  
19 get asked to help them think through things. But none of  
20 them are - I don't have any personal - I don't think I  
21 know anybody who is elected, personally, in a personal  
22 relationship.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. You can probably imagine why  
24 I am asking these questions.

25 MS. BLANCO: Oh, of course. No, it makes sense.

1           CHAIR AHMADI: The Commission is going to be an  
2 independent body. So, if you are selected as a  
3 Commissioner, if you are approached by one of these people  
4 that you know, and your reputation being good in what you  
5 are doing, what would be your response to them?

6           MS. BLANCO: I would tell them that it's - I don't  
7 know if it's illegal, but I would tell them it's illegal!  
8 I suspect it should be. You know, it probably should be  
9 written in as not only a conflict of interest, but really  
10 that we are barred from communicating. And I think maybe  
11 even before even now, maybe people who are Applicants  
12 whose names are still in the pool, that before they go to  
13 the Legislators for the strikes, I think that should be a  
14 policy, that they can't communicate, even once - even now.  
15 And I don't know if it's so important even after the end  
16 of the work for that, and that's, I think, already in a  
17 way covered in the rules. But I think, even now, going  
18 forward, it would be an important thing. I didn't see  
19 that in the Regs, it kind of surprised me.

20           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. How much time do I  
21 have? Five minutes, time flies. Another question that I  
22 wanted to ask you, based on your application material, in  
23 one of the essay questions, and I'm just going to read  
24 your own statement because I think I need some  
25 clarification.



1 MS. BLANCO: Uh huh.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: You state that, on more than one  
3 occasion, as a member of a team, you have been unwilling  
4 to go along with a certain strategy or request a  
5 particular legal remedy. You do not simply object, but  
6 try to explain your different point of view and the reason  
7 for it, and try to bring others along to your viewpoint.  
8 Could you elaborate on that, what you mean by that? If  
9 you can share an example, that would be great.

10 MS. BLANCO: I think on the way up, I was trying  
11 to find some examples. Anyway, I can --

12 CHAIR AHMADI: This is on page 6 of your  
13 application in response to --

14 MS. BLANCO: I actually did think of some examples  
15 on the way up, I wrote them down. And I will tell you  
16 what my thinking was behind that answer.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, please.

18 MS. BLANCO: What I'm trying to convey there is  
19 that, in a way, it was a way of maybe inartfully to convey  
20 my impartiality in these sense that, when I mentioned  
21 teams that I've worked on, they're usually like-minded  
22 people, you know, working - that are a fairly homogeneous  
23 group of, you know - and what I'm trying to convey in that  
24 answer is that I will not always go along just because I'm  
25 sort of, obviously, part of this group, with something

1 that I think should happen. So, you know, as might happen  
2 with the Commission, if I'm a registered Democrat and all  
3 the Democrats on the Commission wanted to - you know, I  
4 won't go along just because there are other Democrats on  
5 the Commission, that's what I'm trying to convey there,  
6 that I - so, I'll give you a couple - I mean, these aren't  
7 good examples, I don't think, but I can give you a little  
8 bit of a sense. For example, there is always talk about  
9 doing a lawsuit about California's education system,  
10 whether it falls below a Constitutional level of adequacy,  
11 and people always - some people tend to jump to their  
12 solution to that when they're thinking of a lawsuit, that  
13 the solution is more money, that it's about demanding  
14 equal funding and that it's a question of money that will  
15 resolve some of the inequities and differences in  
16 different districts, and different outcomes on tests. And  
17 I don't happen to believe that. I think there is more  
18 than money involved in reforming the education system and  
19 that it is way more complicated and involves some things  
20 outside the school systems, some things in the community,  
21 local level strategies, you know, and so I'm willing to  
22 say, "Let's read the stuff and find out how many cases  
23 where you've actually won the lawsuits and people gave  
24 more money and equalized the funding, have there been  
25 improvements, automatically, you know, in some of these

1 indicators, you know, these gaps?"

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: One minute.

3 MS. BLANCO: And then I say, "Okay, so let's talk  
4 about that." So that's an example.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, since I'm running out of  
6 time, thank you so much.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, Ms.  
9 Blanco.

10 MS. BLANCO: Hello.

11 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, go ahead, if you have  
12 anything more to add on to that?

13 MS. BLANCO: No, I think that covered it.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. When you run into  
15 those situations where you have a difference in opinion,  
16 obviously you were saying on the Commission there is going  
17 to be these differing opinions, there needs to be a  
18 consensus. How do you propose to get that consensus?

19 MS. BLANCO: I tried to answer this a little bit  
20 easier. I - first of all, I think it will be important to  
21 differentiate about different types of disagreements, for  
22 example, you could have a disagreement about something  
23 that's all points of view are kind of legitimate, or  
24 acceptable, you know, maybe everybody - it's just a  
25 variation, but everybody is really trying to balance

1 Voting Rights, compactness, you know, county lines, but  
2 there are differences about where people end up on that.  
3 But they are all sort of equally valid points of view.  
4 There can be that kind of difference, and I think there  
5 can be a really big difference, you know, like I mentioned  
6 earlier, where some people think something should be drawn  
7 to anticipate that a district will be a majority district,  
8 and not in 10 years, but during the duration of these new  
9 lines, vs. people who say that's not true if it's under 50  
10 percent, it's 50 percent now, and now we're not compelled  
11 to do that, and let's go back to the other key factors,  
12 you know - compactness, contiguity, community of interest.  
13 And that will be potentially a real difference of opinion  
14 and a very different application of the criteria. And I  
15 think, on the first, you really try and - I think you try  
16 and do consensus by really having people say - you know,  
17 you really try and get everybody to say how important is  
18 this difference, tell me more, you know, and maybe you ask  
19 them to really consider the other point of view - or, you  
20 can even say, "You know, let's hold off on this and see  
21 how these other things down the road work out, and come  
22 back to it," because maybe it will work itself out. And I  
23 think, there, what I personally would try and do,  
24 obviously, I would have one of the points of view, but  
25 maybe somebody in the group, or maybe there will be a

1 couple people in the group, that are willing to step back  
2 and say, "I'm willing to go along maybe with all of these,  
3 so let's...", I'll take myself out and be almost more like  
4 the facilitator for this. Maybe some people will  
5 eventually take that role at different points in the  
6 process. I think, on the really big differences, if it's  
7 a small group that is holding on to one of those things, I  
8 think at some point there has to be a vote because, if  
9 it's a small group holding up on a very big issue and, you  
10 know, there are two people vs. 12 people, there may have  
11 to be - and that's why I say you could try and outline  
12 some of this early on about how you're going to resolve  
13 close calls, tie-breakers, you know, things where it's not  
14 close. And I think in those situations, I think it'll  
15 come down to a vote and people are going to have to agree  
16 that that's not going to create animosity going down the  
17 road when other differences come up, and people will have  
18 to really - we should talk about it after it happens and  
19 try to reestablish the good will among the Commissioners,  
20 but a lot of it is anticipating how things are going to  
21 happen, I think.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, this is when you were  
23 talking about having the guidelines and rules, so have  
24 those discussed prior to any information being received,  
25 or maybe after training, or something, so everyone can

1 have input on what they will agree to?

2 MS. BLANCO: Yes.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You talked a little bit with  
4 Mr. Ahmadi about your experience as in the 2000  
5 redistricting. I heard some of the processes that were  
6 performed. What was your role in that process?

7 MS. BLANCO: Okay, I'll tell you. I was in the  
8 MADEP Sacramento office and, apparently, the way it had  
9 always worked from MALDEF, and I wasn't around for the  
10 redistricting before that, is that they hire a  
11 Redistricting Director that has a team, that does all the  
12 community meetings, and this last time, this person was  
13 really a good techie, had the maps and the computers, and  
14 all of that. And he had his team of techies, too. What  
15 the Sacramento office had traditionally done, and what I  
16 did, because it was a legislative process and I was the  
17 head of the legislative office, they come - when they  
18 would come to Sacramento because they went to the hearings  
19 and testified on the different maps that were presented,  
20 etc., when they would come, sometimes what they would  
21 come, is they'd say, "Look, today we're going to go talk  
22 to this Senator, or Assemblyperson, and have them see what  
23 we're considering and get their reaction to it." And they  
24 didn't just do that with Latino legislators, they did it  
25 where they thought there was going to be an impact on a

1 person's District. And I would go with them to the  
2 meeting because, often, these guys hadn't been here, and I  
3 was sort of the person in the office here, so they thought  
4 it was most effective for me to go with them. And, in  
5 order to go with them, and actually not just sit there,  
6 but be able to converse about what they were doing, they  
7 would show me, they would say, "So, this is what we're  
8 going to go talk to this person about. This is his/her  
9 district, here is where there's been population growth,  
10 this is what we heard in the community meeting about,  
11 something's got to give, and this is what we heard in the  
12 community meetings about what people - people feel that  
13 this freeway is a basic - that this line of transportation  
14 is a basic thing that they want to keep in their  
15 district." Sometimes it was churches, community meeting  
16 halls, even shopping malls or supermarkets, you know, that  
17 they felt were sort of in their area, that they didn't  
18 want to be disconnected from. And so, they would sort of  
19 give me a shorthand of how they had arrived at this, and  
20 I'd go with them to the meeting. And actually, I really  
21 kind of just listened in some cases because I really  
22 wasn't the person that had drawn this. But, if there was  
23 a give and take and some of the considerations - or if it  
24 got a little controversial, I would step in and try and  
25 engage the legislator because they weren't seasoned at

1 dealing with legislators, not that I was, I had only done  
2 it for three years. But they really didn't - they didn't  
3 come out of that background. So that's kind of what I  
4 did.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. So you weren't in  
6 there going to the community meetings and --

7 MS. BLANCO: I didn't go - no, I would hear about  
8 them both in these settings, and then, because even before  
9 I came to the Sacramento office and I was the head of the  
10 MALDEF office in San Francisco, we had hired out of my  
11 office the outreach worker for the Census, that covered  
12 all of Northern California and parts of the Valley East,  
13 and actually Alaska and Washington and Oregon. And I  
14 would work with her to figure out where the outreach would  
15 be, because I knew that some of that outreach would then,  
16 in turn, lead to working relationships with the groups  
17 when it came time to solicit testimony around the  
18 community of interest part of things. So, there was a lot  
19 - that's the way we did it, we actually anticipated - we  
20 tried to do it in phases that were connected, you know,  
21 outreach was connected to going to where there might be  
22 important testimony, etc. etc.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You talked about helping the  
24 Bay Area, the San Francisco Redistricting. What was your  
25 role there?



1 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, that one, I got a little bit  
2 more hands on. My role there was, I think I was - I can't  
3 remember now if I was still at MALDEF or if I'd left, I  
4 really - I think I was still there. And you know, San  
5 Francisco had a Commission set up to do its redistricting,  
6 and there were these - I know a lot of people in San  
7 Francisco from really kind of all walks of life over the  
8 years, and they really had these areas of contention,  
9 serious contention around how to draw some of the -  
10 because they were doing their district lines, you know,  
11 they had their Board of Supervisors and it's district-  
12 based, it's not at large. So, this was about their  
13 districts, District 1, where to draw the lines, you know,  
14 and there were some real areas of difference between  
15 residents and sort of groups. And so, I tried to do what  
16 MALDEF had done sort of at a State level, which was get  
17 different people in the room and see if there was  
18 something that everybody could live with, and then that, I  
19 really did sit with - I didn't know all the - but I did  
20 sit and go, okay, if we move this line here, what do the  
21 numbers look like? And, you know, that kind of stuff.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: With the San Francisco, did  
23 you go out to the communities? Or was it the various  
24 organizations --

25 MS. BLANCO: It was the organizations that

1 represented the communities, and so - not the legal ones,  
2 necessarily, just organizations, but with their people,  
3 instead of me going out to the community.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: What did you learn from both  
5 the San Francisco redistricting and the MALDEF  
6 redistricting regarding public meetings, public input, and  
7 the information that should be obtained from those?

8 MS. BLANCO: Really great question. And I say  
9 that because, just because people come to a meeting, not  
10 everybody in the meeting is representative of the true -  
11 you know, the people with the strongest feelings go to the  
12 meeting, so in some ways you have to account for that.  
13 That's one of the things I learned, that you have to sort  
14 of find out - find other ways of gathering information  
15 about that community beyond the hearings because you might  
16 not be getting all the points of views, or some views will  
17 be over-represented at the testimony because job people  
18 organize better around that issue, and some people might  
19 not be as empowered. So, that's one thing I learned. You  
20 kind of have to supplement it with maybe making some  
21 calling, or meeting with other people that you think  
22 weren't there, you know, and that could be somebody at - a  
23 Pastor, or a Reverend that really knows their  
24 neighborhood. I find a place that really has a good sense  
25 sometimes of neighborhoods are community health clinics

1 see everybody and they - because they sort of deal with  
2 people's lives, not just their health issues, they have  
3 sometimes a good notion, but they don't take the time to  
4 go to these hearings. So, that was one lesson I learned  
5 about the hearings, about what comes out of the hearings.  
6 I think the other thing in just managing a hearing, you  
7 have to really manage tightly the hearing, you have to  
8 have some - they can get really out of hand, they really  
9 can. And so, I think the Commissioners are going to have  
10 to know that and be clear at the beginning of a hearing  
11 that there has to be civility, that you're going to be  
12 strict, that there are going to be time limits, you know,  
13 to run a good hearing, I think that's really important.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Is there anything  
15 else?

16 MS. BLANCO: No.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Who of California should be  
18 heard from?

19 MS. BLANCO: Well, ideally, in some way or  
20 another, everybody. What I mean by that is that I think,  
21 in a way, the Commission is going to have to decide, and  
22 it may be one of those preliminary decisions that the  
23 Commission has to make, in a sense they have to decide who  
24 are the various Californians that we have to hear from,  
25 right? And I don't know what people would say, I really

1 don't. I mean, some people might say, "North, south,  
2 coast, inner, valley, densely populated, sparsely," you  
3 know. I don't know what categories of people will decide  
4 are the various Californians. But I think that's a really  
5 useful way to look at it, and people might say we've got  
6 to make sure seniors are a big part of this, or  
7 immigrants, or groups that you think might not be paid  
8 attention. And then, I think you have to figure out, if  
9 you can't capture that all through hearings because some  
10 of those don't lend themselves to a hearing, I think you  
11 have to find some proxies for those people, whether it's  
12 their organizations that represent them, or you talk to  
13 experts that had studied those different populations  
14 across the state, and are neutral that can give you some  
15 insight. So, I think you're going to have to do some  
16 things indirectly once you agree who those different  
17 Californians are, try to do as much as you can directly,  
18 and then what you can't do directly. I think we still  
19 have to figure out how to determine those interests if we  
20 can't do it through a hearing.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last  
22 question for now.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good morning.

25 MS. BLANCO: Good morning.

1           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How are you? You mentioned  
2 earlier to standard question 1 that one of your weaknesses  
3 is being organized.

4           MS. BLANCO: I should have lied.

5           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Pardon me?

6           MS. BLANCO: I should have lied! "No faults! No  
7 problems!"

8           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You rely heavily on your  
9 administrative assistant to - and you suggested maybe  
10 having one on the Commission that could classify materials  
11 and file.

12           MS. BLANCO: Yeah, not for me, but for the  
13 Commission, staff.

14           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How organized are you at  
15 prioritizing your work and documenting your thoughts?

16           MS. BLANCO: I'm very good at prioritizing my work  
17 because I now for many years have multi-tasked and, I  
18 mean, like a lot. You know, like I was in LA yesterday, I  
19 was in Sacramento the day before, different meetings that  
20 I had to really be focused and I had to decide this week,  
21 "Okay, these are the days that I allot to the preparation  
22 of this, this is...," and then here is the interview, and  
23 you know, in the weeks before all - so I'm used to that  
24 and I think I prioritize well, and I do that on my job,  
25 not just about my task, but sort of evenly institute

1 prioritizing phases of the work, so I think I'm very good  
2 at that. Documenting - and I get into something very -  
3 what is in front of me, I go into very deeply. In terms  
4 of keeping track of my thinking about an issue, how I  
5 arrived at an opinion, or a suggestion, or a  
6 recommendation. I do write it down, I have a little book,  
7 I write all my stuff in - I've learned that, you know,  
8 that - it's not a to-do list, it really is --

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Is that like your journal?

10 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, it's like a journal, a work  
11 journal, though.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: A work journal?

13 MS. BLANCO: It's a work journal. It's, you know,  
14 "Make sure that I tell so and so that, blah, blah, blah."  
15 So I think that I've learned to compensate - I'm not sure  
16 that's an organizational issue, that's more making sure,  
17 when you're doing a lot of things, that you've had this  
18 idea, you've had this insight, you have something you want  
19 to discuss, and then you do five things in the mean time,  
20 and you've got to remember why not only you were going to  
21 bring up, but why. So, that's one of the ways this  
22 developed, you know, is because of that. So I think I can  
23 do that, those two things, well.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Say you get really heavily  
25 involved in stuff that's proliferating in front of you, so

1 what do you do when staff comes up to you and says,  
2 "Multiple stuff is here, look at my stuff, this is  
3 important, look at this stuff." How do you know what's  
4 important to look at, at the time?

5 MS. BLANCO: Well, I usually know that we have  
6 some deadlines and timetables, and they all have a reason  
7 for existing, they're not arbitrary. If a deadline is an  
8 arbitrary one, that's the first thing you kind of - I  
9 mean, you have to decide which deadlines are stat,  
10 inflexible, must be met, other ones that are your own  
11 self-imposed deadlines, or have some room, and then things  
12 you just - you've got a deadline because you want to  
13 motivate people to finish, you know, that's sort of a  
14 different deadline. If people come to me, which they do  
15 all the time with different, "I've got four things and I  
16 need you to review this because I have a deadline," and  
17 somebody else is doing the same thing, which happens a lot  
18 at my job, I've got to go back now and do some edits, I  
19 kind of - I mean, I've learned what is the priority. I'll  
20 ask the question, I'll say, "Why is this urgent to you?  
21 Can this wait two days?" "No." Okay, the other person:  
22 "Can this wait two days?" "No." "Why?" And then, if  
23 they're really adamant and neither one can budge, I try to  
24 get some help, I do, I try to get some help from them  
25 saying, "Okay, why don't you go back and do this much more

1 and come back to me?" So, have them move ahead a little  
2 bit more on their own, or I try to find resources within  
3 the office that can help them with what they need. I am  
4 doing that right now, we have a lot of events planned and  
5 I've had to hire a work study student because everybody -  
6 nobody had any room for giving because they were maxed out  
7 on their deadlines and their time. So, it may mean, say,  
8 if it's in the Commission setting, it may be talking to  
9 another Commissioner and saying, "Are you done with what  
10 you were doing? Can you look at this and look at it  
11 first, and then I'll come back to it? Because I'm  
12 still..., " you know, there may be things you can do like  
13 that, or with staff to sort of summarizing some - I think  
14 there are ways you can --

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Balance them.

16 MS. BLANCO: Balance - I do, I do. It's rare that  
17 something really absolutely -- both things have the exact  
18 same timetable, even though the people that are telling  
19 you that think so.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What do you want to see in  
21 staff and in their skills and abilities as they assist the  
22 Commission, given the limited resources?

23 MS. BLANCO: Right, yeah. Well, organized. But I  
24 think it's really true, somebody has got to keep this  
25 thing moving smoothly because, you know, it's a lot and if



1 you get stuck with disorganized, you know, the meetings  
2 don't get set up right, and the hearings are not planned  
3 well, and the materials aren't ready, it can really - so I  
4 think you have to tell - not the legal staff - but the  
5 administrative staff, if there is a separation, or if it's  
6 all one, I don't know what to say about that. But if  
7 there is sort of a distinction between legal staff and  
8 administrative, they have to understand that that's their  
9 role, it's to keep things running smoothly, you know, so  
10 that the Commissioners can think less about those kind of  
11 details and focus on their work.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah. What do you want to  
13 see, given your prior districting experience? What do you  
14 want to see in maybe experts or consultants to assist the  
15 Commission?

16 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, I do think the Commission is  
17 going to need experts. I was thinking about it when I was  
18 thinking about how to resolve differences, that we should  
19 actually - sometimes we may have to get expert advice. I  
20 think it's tough in the voting redistricting arena because  
21 most of the people in that field are sort of, because of  
22 the way it's been in the Legislature, the people that have  
23 a lot of experience, have been map drawers for elected's.  
24 I mean, they really are --

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Already influenced?

1 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, already influenced, so I think  
2 we would have to find experts that are really - you've got  
3 to really make sure they're impartial.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you determine that?

5 MS. BLANCO: Well, we might go out of California.  
6 You know? So that they don't have connections or prior  
7 work in California, but still know the area. I think you  
8 can't use them for everything, they might not have a sense  
9 as much of the communities of interest, but there might be  
10 some ways in which they can be very useful. And so, I  
11 don't know if you keep them on - you have some that you've  
12 identified early and you keep them on retainer, or  
13 whatever, or whether you go and you identified them, and  
14 you use them ad hoc. I'm not sure, I think it's something  
15 the Commissioners are going to have to talk about, about  
16 what works better. Did you ask me legal staff, as well?

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah, I was curious about  
18 what you felt about legal, knowing that it could be a  
19 problem.

20 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, I think legal staff - it's a  
21 little bit of a similar problem, but in the sense that, if  
22 you want people that know voting, redistricting, sort of  
23 election law, you know, and they're from California, they  
24 may have all been through these things before. On the  
25 other hand, I think you will find - maybe this is my

1 lawyer bias - that they may be - they tend to follow the  
2 law, you know, even if they --

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: They tend to? Or all the  
4 time?

5 MS. BLANCO: I would hope that they all would, but  
6 what I mean is lawyers do, for the most part, we're very  
7 rigid in that sense, if we're given "these are the Regs,  
8 these are your criteria, this is the legal standard, here  
9 are the old cases, read them." They're going to work to  
10 apply that. So, I think it's a little - the bias issue is  
11 a little less problematic with the lawyers. And so, I  
12 think, given that, I would like to see people that have  
13 some experience.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In redistricting law?

15 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, I would. I just think you have  
16 14 Commissioners, and I don't know who is going to end up  
17 in the process that may have none, or some, or little.  
18 And then you have, if you have an attorney that doesn't  
19 have that, I think that you do need expertise.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What did you learn about the  
21 conflicts, legal issues affecting redistricting?

22 MS. BLANCO: The what?

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The conflicts, legal issues  
24 affecting redistricting?

25 MS. BLANCO: Oh, my gosh. The complexity is - it

1 sounds easy, you know, you take your map and first you do  
2 the population growth, and then you're going to put on top  
3 of that your Census Tract, and then - you know, and you  
4 think, "Oh, I'm just going to layer this," and then all of  
5 a sudden you realize that there the interaction between  
6 the factors can get - not everywhere, in some places it  
7 ends up pretty neat and straightforward, but there are  
8 some places where it's not easy to balance all the  
9 factors, I think that's the complexity, balancing all the  
10 factors, because even if you have the criteria that is in  
11 Prop. 11, and it's prioritized, which is really, by the  
12 way, helpful that it is prioritized because, again, if  
13 you're literal, you will do that. Even with that, there  
14 are going to be judgment calls. And - and - and things  
15 that aren't obvious, there may be things that you have --  
16 when you look at San Francisco right now and you look at  
17 some of the maps for - not the District maps, but the  
18 Congressional Districts, which we won't be doing --

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You never know.

20 MS. BLANCO: -- and I say "we" generically, not,  
21 you know. But you look at that and you would think it was  
22 gerrymandered because you look at a District that goes -  
23 is divided by the Golden Gate Bridge - or maybe it's the  
24 State Senate District, I cannot remember, and you think,  
25 "Oh, that's clearly somebody wanted to protect," you know,

1 "somebody lived here." And then, when you really look at  
2 it, you realize, no, it was really like - this place was  
3 very heavily populated, this one was sparsely populated,  
4 you know, up towards Sonoma, and in order to have the  
5 population and, ba ba ba, that there is - and somebody  
6 explains it to you, you realize that there were really  
7 very few alternative ways of doing it. And that gets  
8 complicated because you're always worrying that somebody  
9 is going to look at it, too, and go, "Oh, gerrymandered."  
10 But sometimes there are - things don't look pretty, and  
11 usually that's a good sign that something is wrong, if it  
12 doesn't look good, and the Court says that, you know, the  
13 Supreme Court will say, "It looked funny." So, that's a  
14 valid point, but it's complex. It's complex. And I hope  
15 the personalities - I'm really hoping the personalities of  
16 the Commission don't make it more complex, that actually  
17 taking it out of Legislators' hands and people that are  
18 committed to having a good process will reduce some of the  
19 complexity.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned some things  
21 aren't obvious. Do you recall from your experience what  
22 things weren't obvious, that played a big part in your  
23 decision-making in drawing the lines?

24 MS. BLANCO: I don't know, I think some of the  
25 surprises for me were communities of interest. In other

1 words, I - we might not know because we're not from a  
2 certain area that there is this identity in this  
3 community, that is because they are cattle ranchers, you  
4 know, and you're thinking agricultural, maybe, and water,  
5 and then you realize there's this huge group that  
6 identifies around sort of something that you don't think  
7 of as an organizing principle for a community, so those  
8 were some surprises.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: That were defining? Very  
10 defining?

11 MS. BLANCO: Yeah. I don't remember them all,  
12 it's been 10 years.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How does one go out and know  
14 where to go to get these unobvious interests that are  
15 absolutely critical?

16 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, well, this is, I think, going  
17 to be one of the keys for the Commission, is, first of  
18 all, there are people - I don't think we should throw out  
19 all the knowledge that exists just because we want to be  
20 independent and impartial; there are people that have  
21 written articles about communities, about the economies of  
22 different part of the State, I mean, there is a lot of  
23 literature, even some of the old Decisions Courts have  
24 done about - because almost, except this last one -  
25 they've almost all gone to, ended up at a Special Master,

1 with eventually a Supreme Court Decision. And I think  
2 that's worth people starting out with because there is a  
3 lot in there about what they looked at to --

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The Special Masters?

5 MS. BLANCO: Yeah, to see - to analyze the maps  
6 that were presented and why they don't agree, and then to  
7 come up with a new map. They have really lengthy, very  
8 interesting explanations. So, I don't think that stuff  
9 should be, you know, cast aside because we've got a new  
10 structure, I think you can learn things from that.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did you utilize that type of  
12 source in your analysis in determining and assisting in  
13 this?

14 MS. BLANCO: I didn't, but some of the people that  
15 were doing the actual going out and doing --

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Outreach --

17 MS. BLANCO: -- outreach and doing community  
18 hearings were supervised on the legal side by somebody who  
19 had been through - it was her third, maybe, redistricting,  
20 and had - knew all about the Special - you know, she  
21 trained them about what the Special Master opinions, you  
22 know - that might be interesting, to make sure that the  
23 training for the Commissioners is not just a technical  
24 training, or about use of data, or the principles of  
25 reapportionment and redistricting, but maybe to also -

1 even training about sources for how you determine  
2 communities of interest and sources, bibliographies, etc.,  
3 so that there's some sense of how to supplement when you  
4 don't know.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you find this the most  
6 difficult area to kind of firm it?

7 MS. BLANCO: I - I think it's the most difficult  
8 because, in some ways, I think it's very pivotal. You  
9 know, the Voting Rights Act is very pivotal, but it plays  
10 out in certain locations. But all the locations, you  
11 really have to be thinking about the compactness, the  
12 contiguity, and the communities of interest and the  
13 nesting - nesting is a huge issue.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In what way?

15 MS. BLANCO: Well, that sometimes it's not  
16 obvious, I mean, the guidelines are clear that if the  
17 preference is for -- is it two Assembly and one Senate  
18 District, to be nested in that Senate District, but that  
19 requirement can then cause other things to get out of  
20 whack. You know?

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

22 MS. BLANCO: So, I think people are going to have  
23 to - you know, I think it would be good to have sort of a  
24 bibliography that talks about how important is the  
25 nesting, it's in the rules, but maybe - I bet you, given



1 the number of political scientists that have studied, it's  
2 a very heavily researched area, so this is the good news,  
3 that have thought about nesting principles. I'm sure  
4 somebody has some nesting principles, you know, somewhere.  
5 So...

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, are there  
8 follow-up questions?

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Not at this point.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Bless you, or whatever is  
11 happening over there.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I have cough drops.

13 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Blanco, did you  
15 participate in any way in the drafting or consultation on  
16 the drafting of Prop. 11?

17 MS. BLANCO: No.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, you know, there's a lot  
19 of suspicion out there, there are people who will look at  
20 you as a candidate and say you worked for MALDEF, you  
21 litigated on behalf of Latinos, you're a lawyer --

22 MS. BLANCO: Yeah.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: They're going to assume,  
24 based on those qualifications alone, that you're biased in  
25 favor of Latinos, that you're going to provide MALDEF an

1 in-road. What do you say to those people?

2 MS. BLANCO: I don't think - what I would say to  
3 those people is that the guidelines are so clear, and I  
4 think the people who drafted it did a very good job of  
5 that, understood that they had to lay out not only the  
6 core criteria, but prioritize. So, what I would say to  
7 people is, I'm not at liberty to do any of those things,  
8 not that I want to, but if I had an instinct to do that.  
9 I mean, everybody on that Commission is going to have some  
10 bias. You know, I think it is a little unfortunate that  
11 people think there's a bias because you represented a  
12 minority group, because there could be biases that are  
13 political biases, there could be biases because people are  
14 suspicious of immigrants, I mean, you know, so I wouldn't  
15 get defensive, but I might point that out, that there are  
16 other biases, as well. But mainly I'd point out that we  
17 are going to be working within guidelines and that there  
18 are a lot of check - that because there are 14 people and  
19 it has been carefully thought out how many people have to  
20 vote for the plan, and from what constituency, that there  
21 is not an ability for mischief, you know, that that's been  
22 thought out, again, very well by the drafters, you know,  
23 the three votes from the majority, you know. So, I think  
24 that people don't know - a lot of people, I think, aren't  
25 familiar with either the criteria as it is laid out, or

1 the voting for the maps as it's laid out. I think if you  
2 tell them that, that'll go a long way for some of the  
3 suspicion. And it might be important at some point, I  
4 don't know who would do this, but before this whole  
5 process launches, to let the public know in a sense that  
6 this is how this Commission is going to function, that  
7 it's very carefully thought out so that one group can't  
8 hijack the process, whether it's a political group or a  
9 special interest group, or, you know, and even tell them,  
10 "Look at the rules, and look at the criteria, it's laid  
11 out, they've got to go by a script." And I would tell  
12 them, just, you know, you can't tell everybody this, but  
13 people who know me know that I have a reputation for being  
14 very fair.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So you were talking about  
16 the complexities of redistricting and I have only dabbled,  
17 but I totally agree with you. What does the VRA require  
18 when you have two minority groups, neither of which have a  
19 majority, maybe they're both 40 percent, and they don't  
20 necessarily have a history of the same representational  
21 interests, so you could kind of draw the District a way  
22 that either benefits one or the other, or none. What is  
23 required in that circumstance, if there is a clear answer?

24 MS. BLANCO: There's not a clear answer. And I  
25 was sort of alluding to that earlier when I said, you

1 know, you might have what people call an influence, the  
2 possibility of an influenced District, that at least that  
3 group might have some ability, if you draw it a certain  
4 way, to influence you, than if it's not majority, or if  
5 you have the situation where you're going to be a majority  
6 in three years because you know the trend, but not now.  
7 It's not - I don't think - there is not clarity on this.  
8 I mean, we've gotten over the years some things that  
9 aren't the case, you know, in some of the recent Supreme  
10 Court decisions about, well, they left open the question  
11 of a Coalition District, for example, so that, in the  
12 past, had been one way that people have done that. But  
13 the law is not clear on that. And so, I think that - and  
14 that came up, you know, those were actually real  
15 situations the last time because you had places where  
16 populations had grown -- different sort of minority group  
17 populations had grown, but neither was 50 percent. And  
18 then, I think, I do think that then you - the law may not  
19 be the law on VRA, but it may be community interest law to  
20 the extent that there is law. That might be what you turn  
21 to, other parts, and laws about - decisions about  
22 geography, you know, the importance of contiguity, you  
23 know, or you might have to look at other stuff. I would  
24 hope that the Commissioners - this is my own opinion, that  
25 in looking at the heavy emphasis on the Voting Rights Act,

1   that people would think about the intent of that Act, and  
2   all the Supreme Court has said in a lot of cases is, "This  
3   is not unconstitutional, but it doesn't say you can't do  
4   certain things," you know. So what they said is this is  
5   not required by the Voting Rights Act to have an  
6   influenced District, but they don't say you can't draw it  
7   like that. So, you know, I would hope that the Commission  
8   would think about sort of the overall, the future, the  
9   spirit of the Act, that if it can really contribute to a  
10   population that has never had a representative getting  
11   close to that, that they would to that even if it's not  
12   required, you know? I think we would have to have some  
13   philosophical discussions like that, even if the law is  
14   not clear, to sort of get behind the law, at what the  
15   intent was.

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So you alluded a little  
17   while ago about the case that you brought regarding the  
18   Latino District that had been - you said split - and it  
19   seemed like it was pretty clear that it diluted the vote.  
20   But you said you didn't win.

21           MS. BLANCO: Right.

22           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What happened?

23           MS. BLANCO: I don't know. Well, the original  
24   proposed map took - the District, as it existed at the  
25   time, before the redrawing, had grown to be a very high

1 percentage Latino, I can't remember the exact percentage,  
2 and the original proposed redrawn map reduced it to 30.  
3 And then there was a lot of back and forth, and it was  
4 adjusted, so it wasn't as dramatic a drop in the  
5 percentage of the Latino population in that area. So,  
6 basically, the Court insisted on a standard of intentional  
7 discrimination in order for us to win the case, that there  
8 were - that the main reason was a racial reason, and not  
9 other reasons. And that's a very hard standard to meet in  
10 some ways, you know, how do you prove the racial intent of  
11 something, and there were a lot of other reasons given,  
12 you know, for it.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Did you take it up?

14 MS. BLANCO: Did we take it up? I think we did  
15 take it up - did we take it up? I don't remember if we  
16 went up to the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit or not, I don't remember.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, with your experience,  
18 where would you start drawing the lines?

19 MS. BLANCO: Well, I would probably take the  
20 existing map and overlap - the first thing I would overlay  
21 is the Census data map, to see clearly where the  
22 population growth is, overlaid on the current lines. I've  
23 been tempted - I thought a lot about just going blank, but  
24 I suspect that, even if you did that, you would end up  
25 with something very similar to what we have, and while

1 that may build credibility about the fact that this is  
2 really a whole new process and a new group of people and  
3 really taking a fresh look at it, I'm concerned that it  
4 would be extremely time consuming and not necessarily that  
5 productive, but I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I'm open to  
6 that and would like to talk to the other Commissioners  
7 about it, if I were in that situation. But, if I were  
8 going to start with something, I think I would start with  
9 that and then do the Census data first.

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, are there  
11 additional questions?

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: I do have one. How much time do we  
14 have?

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: We have just over four  
16 minutes.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: At what point you will also, in  
18 response to the last question that Stephanie had, you  
19 mentioned take the current map and just add the Census  
20 data to it to see how it looks; at what point do you think  
21 it's important to also include the public input for  
22 communities?

23 MS. BLANCO: Oh, I think that should be happening  
24 all along, I don't think it should be we do this and then  
25 we start getting the input.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thanks.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Other questions, Panelists?

3 No? We have about three minutes and 30 seconds, Ms.

4 Blanco, if you'd like to make a closing statement.

5 MS. BLANCO: I would. I know that I've probably

6 said a lot about the complexity and difficulty of the

7 process, and the obvious question is, why would anybody

8 want to do that? But I really want to do this. I feel

9 that I have the skills, a tremendous interest in this.

10 Don't ask me, at some level, I don't even know why I

11 believe so strongly in this, but I do. And I really want

12 the Commission to work, and I think, not only do I have

13 sort of the analytical skills and some of the background

14 knowledge in the subject area, but I think my team ability

15 would be a really important factor for the Commission. I

16 think it would be really helpful. And I'm a workhorse, so

17 I'm not scared of the work, so I just want to let you know

18 that this is sort of a Hail Mary for me, "Oh, let's see if

19 I can get on this Commission," I really want to do it.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much for

21 coming to see us, Ms. Blanco. Let's recess until 12:59.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

23 (Off the record at 12:27 p.m.)

24